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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this monograph is to facilitate the development of curricula in interpersonal communication by describing the area and identifying methods and resources available to teachers and students who wish to develop coursework in interpersonal communication. Some of the topics covered include: a definition of interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication and group communication, approaches to interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, general rules and guidelines for interpersonal communication teaching and learning, comments on teaching methods, models, and a laboratory approach to interpersonal learning. A resource section on theories of interpersonal communication, textbooks in interpersonal communication, content of interpersonal communication, and methods for interpersonal learning is also included. (WR)

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Interpersonal Communication:

Teaching Strategies and Resources

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FOREWORD

As the body of information derived from educational research has expanded, so has the gap between research and classroom teaching. Recognizing this problem, the National Institute of Education (NIE) has charged ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) to go beyond its initial function of gathering, evaluating, indexing, and disseminating information to a significant new service: information analysis and synthesis.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—much informative data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, NIE has now directed the separate ERIC Clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities state-of-the-art papers in specific areas.

Each state-of-the-art paper focuses on a concrete educational need. The paper attempts a comprehensive treatment and qualitative assessment of the published and unpublished material on the topic. The author reviews relevant research, curriculum trends, teaching materials, the judgments of recognized experts in the field, reports and findings from various national committees and commissions. In his analysis he tries to answer the question "Where are we?"; sometimes finds order in apparently disparate approaches; often points in new directions. The knowledge contained in a state-of-the-art paper is a necessary foundation for reviewing existing curricula, planning new beginnings, and aiding the teacher in *now* situations.

Publication of *Interpersonal Communication: Teaching Strategies and Resources* marks the debut of the first of several reports to be prepared under the auspices of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and published by the Speech Communication Association. Each report will provide the reader with a practical, state-of-the-art introduction to a discrete topic of contemporary importance to students, teachers, administrators, and research specialists concerned with communication and the classroom.

It is particularly appropriate that this initial report deals with instruction in *interpersonal* communication. Contemporary educators are acutely conscious that quality instruction hinges on efficient, effective interpersonal relationships. Speech communication educators now recognize that instruc-

tion in *interpersonal* communication must assume a position of primacy in the communication curricula at all educational levels. And a communication-conscious society is demanding that educators help students acquire that *full range* of communication skills necessary to achieve meaningful social adjustment and economic mobility.

In the pages to follow, Alvin Goldberg and Alton Barbour effectively affirm the fundamental importance of interpersonal communication as a curricular component and as a contributor to quality instruction. They provide the reader with an *introduction* to the topic—a practical survey of the substance, resources, and pedagogical implications of what is the most rapidly expanding subject area in the field of speech communication.

Patrick C. Kennicott
Associate Director, ERIC/RCS

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, ERIC/RCS

PREFACE

Interpersonal communication is one of the fastest growing areas of study, teaching, and application in the speech communication discipline. But this interest in interpersonal communication is a very recent phenomenon. Although some universities began to develop curricula in interpersonal communication in the early 1950s, formal courses in the subject were not offered at most high schools and universities until the 1960s. As a result, many individuals who are teaching interpersonal communication have received almost no formal training in the subject. Furthermore, a large number of alternatives are available to the teacher of interpersonal communication with regard to content, classroom approach, and materials. The purpose of this publication is to facilitate the development of curricula in interpersonal communication by describing the area and identifying methods and resources available to teachers and students who wish to develop coursework in interpersonal communication.

The writers would like to extend their appreciation to Pat Kennicott, Gerald Miller, Linda Reed, James McCroskey, and John Keltner, whose comments and encouragement aided in the development of this book.

Alton Barbour

Alvin A. Goldberg

Teaching Strategies

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: WHAT IS IT?

If someone sets out to teach interpersonal communication, what is he about? Is interpersonal communication just "applied communication theory" or "the rhetoric of person-to-person discourse"? For close to three decades now, some speech teachers have led their students to confront social issues in small group settings. They have engaged in inquiry and reasoned interchange, solved problems, and made decisions jointly. They have achieved consensus and utilized group processes to that end. Was this interpersonal communication? That is, is interpersonal communication just a new label for some instructional concept that's been around for a long time, or is it genuinely distinct? Is it old hat or a new development? We believe it to be the latter. Let's look at some of the reasons for our belief.

The traditionalists in human communication have drawn largely from rhetoric. Not the rhetoric of the streets, but the best, most profound, and most eloquent rhetoric of ages past. The traditionalists have drawn from art, or from examples of the use of human language that are so closely identified with art, such as poetry and drama, that the differences between them are minimal. In drawing from art, they have tended to emphasize the substance or content aspect of communication. The study of rhetoric has largely been a study of "what was said." If something has been said exceptionally well, it can be claimed that it was said "artfully."

Another area that has concerned the traditionalist is that of improving the skills of a speaker or writer. Writing is judged against some standard of mechanical proficiency, that is, whether it meets the requirements of grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and "readability." A speaker is expected to organize his thoughts, look at his audience, be coherent, and demonstrate something called "fluency." The "classical canons of oratory" can be looked upon as standards by which one might judge the skills of a speaker. Some of these standards are similar to the standards used to judge writing skills, and others are quite different.

A number of people in speech communication are specialists in group communication processes. Is group communication the same as "interpersonal" communication? Students of group communication have been concerned with the "dynamics of groups" and their potential for making decisions and solving problems effectively. They have been mostly interested in the task and process aspects of group discussion. They are problem- and process-centered. They will tell us that discussion occurs when a common problem is recognized and a cooperative process occurs to solve that problem. Group communication teachers help students become more effec-

tive in solving joint problems together by training them to organize and compose their ideas, to reason properly, to listen and speak effectively, and to avoid unnecessary disagreements over non-substantive issues. The discussants acquire the necessary skills so that they can deal appropriately with most of the problems with which they are jointly confronted. Discussants are expected to employ refined standards of logic, organization, and analysis within the group. The focus of the discussion teacher has been on task content, that is, the solution of the joint problems, and his approach has been to lead his students to achieve more sophistication in accomplishing this work: an intellectual rendering of the topic, a rational decision made, a problem creatively solved. To facilitate task accomplishment, the problem-centered group communication teacher has attempted to help his students use such processes as consideration, cooperation, inquiry, and "open-mindedness." He has tried to help his students be more "personable," but he has emphasized these as skills and concentrated on task.

There is nothing wrong with the development of discussion skills. Such skills are highly relevant to survival in our society. It is worthwhile for students to learn processes of systematic thinking and effective reasoning and to be able to deal appropriately with substantive issues in groups. These are all valuable skills and there is considerable need for them. While not in any way devaluing the usefulness of traditional discussion approaches to human communication, a growing number of individuals have come to believe that it would be equally instructive to deal at greater depth with the interpersonal communication that passes between people. These individuals suggest that we look more intensively at the interpersonal aspects of group interactions in order to see *what goes on inside and between the participants* while people are dealing with task or content. Their purpose is to better understand the interpersonal aspect of the phenomenon of human communication.

These people are concerned with interpersonal behaviors. In addition to drawing from the arts, they draw from the behavioral sciences such as psychology, social psychology and sociology, psychiatry, clinical psychology, medicine, physics, chemistry, and so on, so as to better understand the total group behavior, including personal and interpersonal malfunctions. People who have taken this more inclusive approach to understanding what goes on in groups and what happens when two or more people meet together to communicate with one another informally were instrumental in the development of interpersonal communication as an area of study, research, and application.

By and large, teachers of interpersonal communication are interested in skill training and personal improvement. They also see what they do as a content area—a rigorous scientific discipline. The values they identify with are the values of humanism or humanistic psychology. They read the empirical, theoretical, and philosophical literature that deals with any aspect of human communication behavior. They employ a variety of the clinical

methods as instruments for instructing their students about the processes of interpersonal relations. These methods are used by skilled teachers to facilitate personal growth rather than as prescriptions for curing the sick. Some have received special training outside the formal structure of a college or university at some special institute, academy, or laboratory. As these people view it, an interpersonal communication focus (1) emphasizes the process of the person interacting rather than the verbal content of the interaction, (2) emphasizes behaviors and skills which extend the alternatives available for interpersonal communication, (3) includes affective as well as cognitive dimensions, (4) draws from the behavioral and other sciences as well as from the humanities, (5) is concerned about both verbal and nonverbal human messages and responses, and (6) represents an emphasis on the objective investigation of the experience of person-to-person communication.

Interpersonal communication, then, might be said to be the perception, description, analysis, and improvement of informal human communication processes and interpersonal behavioral experience. Scholars who work in the area are likely to spend their time gathering or examining data and formulating principles or developing theories of interpersonal communication. Teachers of interpersonal communication would want to acquaint their students with the theories, principles, or data which comprise the area. They would also want to provide their students with experiences which help them internalize the data or principles and integrate the data or principles with their own lives.

This book is not written for the scholar or researcher, but for the individual who is interested in teaching his students about interpersonal communication. It is a challenging and exciting area to teach in, partially because it is new enough that relevant discoveries are made on week-to-week bases and can become the object or substance of class sessions for an alert teacher.

The study of interpersonal communication allows for tremendous flexibility and resourcefulness in techniques and methods of teaching and learning. Fundamentally, however, the teacher must be able to facilitate learning, to provide information, to structure face-to-face experiences which place the responsibility for learning on the students, to identify and utilize resources in the class for information and insight, and, most importantly, to practice what he preaches about the ways in which individuals relate to and communicate with one another.

The teacher of interpersonal communication has the opportunity to reach students where they "live" and thereby to have considerable impact and lasting effect. That is something that can't be said about many of the courses in the curriculum. The teacher of interpersonal communication has an advantage over many other teachers and an awesome responsibility to his students. This book is intended to assist the teacher in using his advantage and fulfilling his responsibility.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND GROUP COMMUNICATION

How does interpersonal communication differ from group communication? We have already suggested that the two overlap. Many face-to-face situations could be described and experienced either way, depending on the particular purpose of the observer or the predilections of the communicators.

An observer of individuals in interaction who focuses on such phenomena as the ideas that are expressed, how decisions are made, how opinions are stated and supported, and how leadership is distributed is concerned largely with group communication processes. On the other hand, the observer of interaction who examines the participants' attraction for one another, their empathy, their apparent willingness to self-disclose, and their expressions of affection is concerned largely with interpersonal communication processes.

Similar distinctions can be made if we approach the matter from the vantage point of the communicators themselves. If they see themselves as having a group identity, if they are task oriented, and if they follow an agenda and relate to one another on the basis of their roles in a formal structure, it could be said that they are involved in a group communication process. However, if their focus is largely on their interpersonal encounter and the personal satisfactions they can derive from it through the sharing of interests, opinions, and feelings, it would be appropriate to state that they are involved in an interpersonal communication process.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Interpersonal communication as an area of study, research, and application is concerned primarily with dyadic interaction, although interpersonal processes occur in triads and in larger groups. The phenomena associated with interpersonal communication are those that are related to the perceptions the participants have of themselves, each other, and the interpersonal situation. Although interpersonal communication can be differentiated from group communication and other interest areas in speech communication, such as organizational communication, interpersonal processes influence the communication events that occur on group and organizational levels. Many of the models, concepts, and principles associated with the speech communication process in general or with communication phenomena on individual, group, or organizational levels can assist us in understanding interpersonal communication. The following section identifies some of the more important speech communication models.

MODELS

A major purpose of most communication models is to help us understand the communication process by providing a figure or a set of concepts that are systematically arranged so that they represent an abstraction of that process. Since a model is an abstraction of the event it represents, it deliberately oversimplifies the event by leaving out some details and highlighting others.

Many models of the communication process have been developed. The following models were selected for presentation because they are helpful in describing and understanding interpersonal events.

The Lasswell Model

A verbal model of the communication process was developed a number of years ago by Harold D. Lasswell. The model consists essentially of a number of questions that can be asked about a communication situation. Although Lasswell was primarily concerned about mass communication, his model could be used to analyze an interpersonal communication situation. The Lasswell model consists of the following questions:

1. Who?
2. Says what?
3. In which channel?
4. To whom?
5. With what effect?[1]

The Shannon-Weaver Model

The Shannon-Weaver model was designed primarily to explain the transmission of information by telephone. However, the model can also be used to describe some of the elements in an interpersonal communication situation.

Berlo's SMCR Model

The general model of the communication process developed by David Berlo identifies some basic communication variables. Although the model has been criticized for not including a reference to feedback, Berlo's classifications provide a good basis for categorizing communication concepts.

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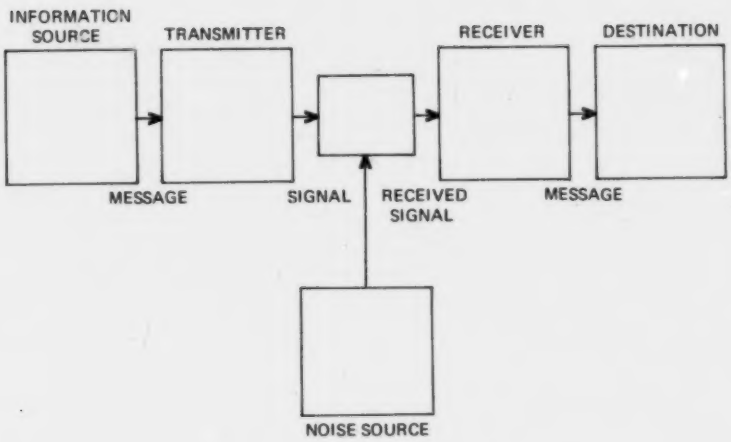
[1] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communications in Society," in Lyman Bryson, ed., *The Communication of Ideas* (New York: Harper & Row, 1948), p. 37.



The Shannon-Weaver Model[2]

[2]Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 98. Reprinted by permission of The University of Illinois Press.

[3]From *The Process of Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, by David K. Berlo. Copyright © 1960 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

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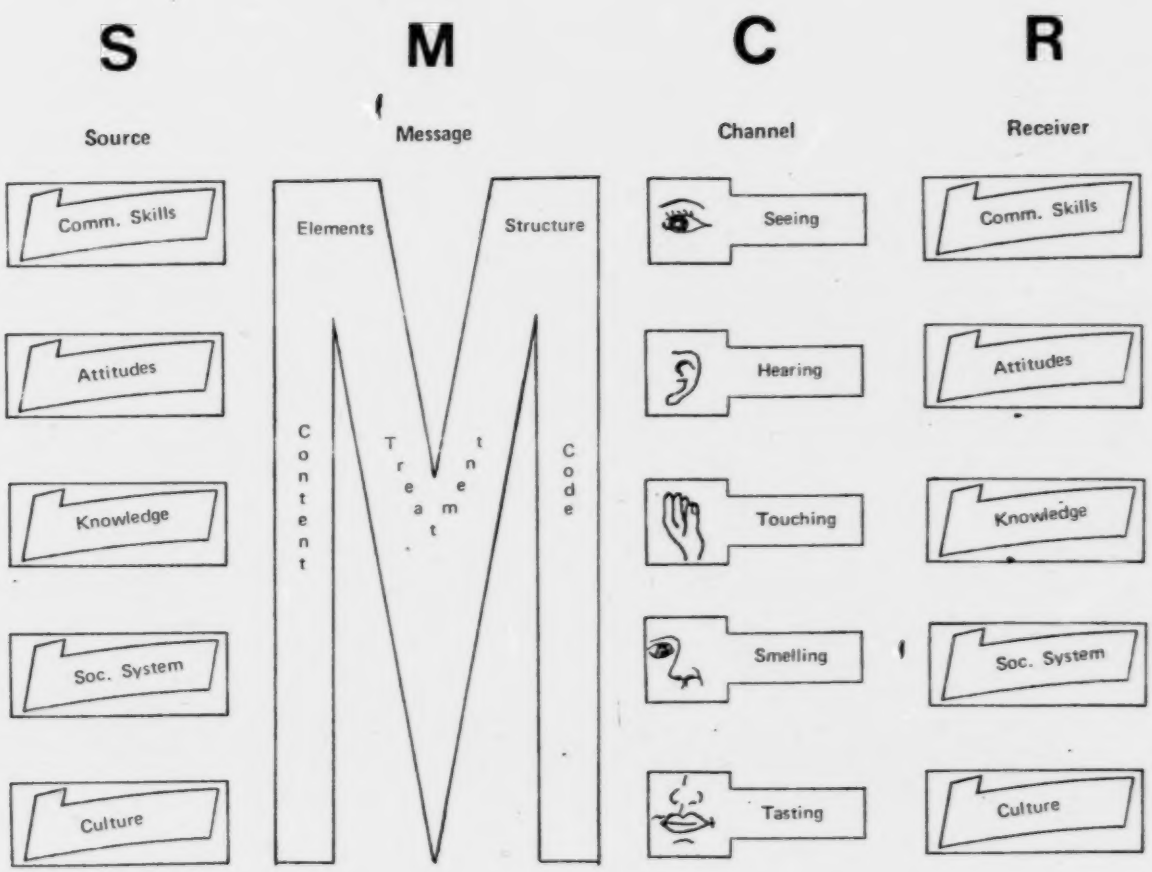

THE BERLO MODEL[3]

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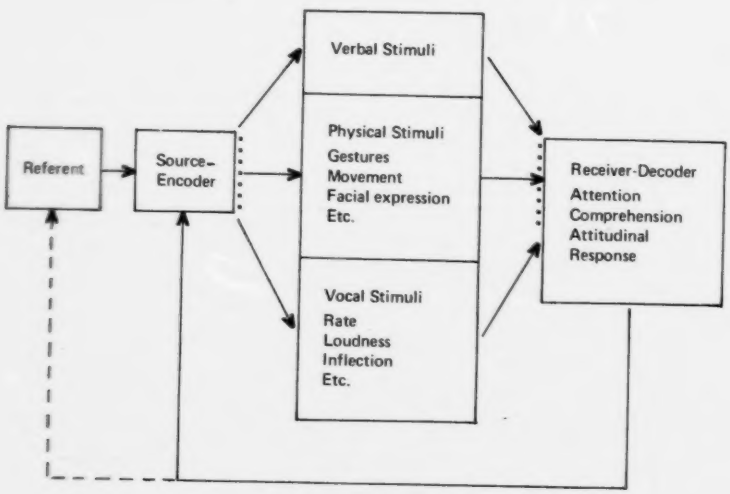
The Miller Model

One of the more elaborate models of the communication process was developed by Gerald Miller. A major characteristic of Miller's model is the distinction it makes between verbal and nonverbal messages. The nonverbal messages are divided into physical and vocal stimuli.



The Miller Model[4]

Since the Miller model is more intricate than the models presented thus far, additional explanation is needed to clarify its characteristics. The source-encoder identified in the model develops a message dealing with some situation, idea, act, or experience. Whatever it is that the message deals with is labelled "referent." The entire message system is represented by verbal, physical, and vocal stimuli. The dotted lines in the model refer to the fact that all three stimuli occur at the same time. The arrows from the receiver-decoder to the source-encoder and to the referent demonstrate that the receiver of a message may react to the sender of the message system as well as to the message content and both of these responses are likely to influence the meaning that the receiver-decoder generates as a result of the transaction.

[4]From *Speech Communication: A Behavioral Approach,* by Gerald R. Miller, copyright © 1966, by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., reprinted by permission of the publisher.

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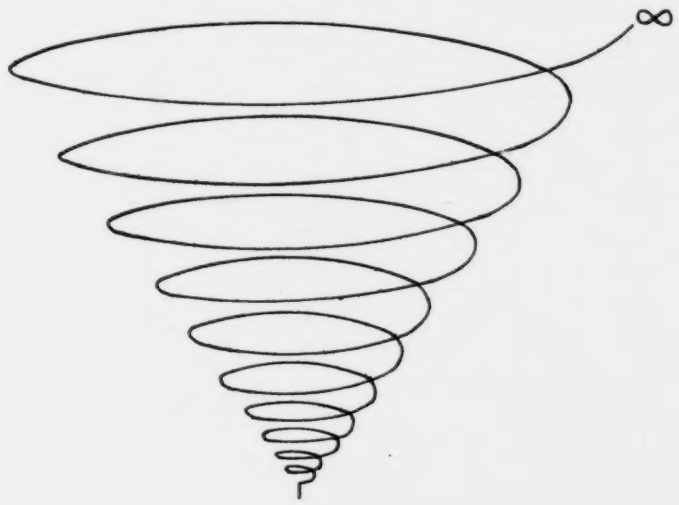
Dance's Helical Model of Communication

Frank E. X. Dance's helical model of communication avoids some of the problems associated with both linear and circular models. Linear models often fail to take feedback adequately into consideration, and circular models wrongly suggest that communication returns in a circular fashion to its original point. The helix has some of the worthwhile features of both the straight line and the circle. The helix suggests that while moving forward, communication also moves back upon itself and is affected by its previous behavior.



The Dance Model[5]

The Ross Model

The Raymond Ross model of human communication includes such environmental factors as climate, situation, and culture. It also contains a feedback loop.

Barnlund's Transactional Model

Dean C. Barnlund's model is more specifically concerned with inter-

[5]From "Toward a Theory of Human Communication" by Frank E. X. Dance, in *Human Communication Theory: Original Essays,* edited by Frank E. X. Dance. Copyright © 1967 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Reproduced by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

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personal communication than the other models presented in this section. Although the model appears complicated, it is not difficult to understand. The two circles, P_1 and P_2, represent two individuals in interaction. Each interacting individual sees the public cues (CPU) in his immediate environment and experiences private cues (CPR) such as tension or an itch; each individual also generates and responds to nonverbal ($C_{BEH_{NV}}$) and verbal (C_{BEH_V}) cues. The nonverbal cues consist of facial expressions, posture, movements, and the like, and the verbal cues consist of the words that are spoken.

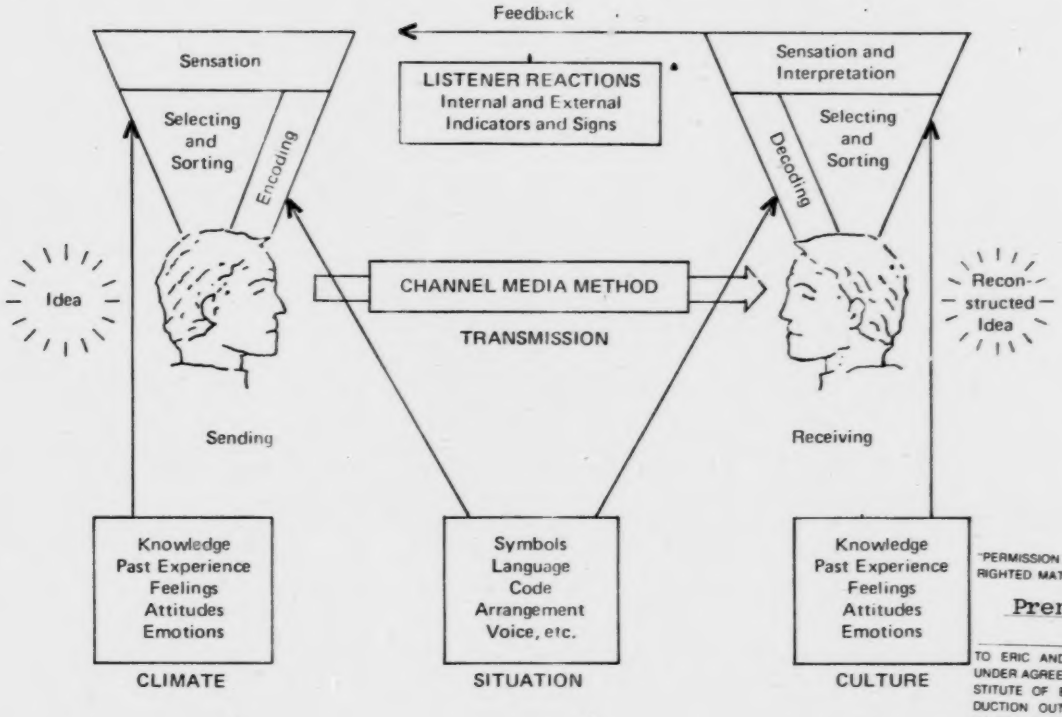
The Galvin Models

The simplified and elaborated versions of the communication model developed by Kathleen M. Galvin are presented here because, in addition to their usefulness in describing interpersonal communication, they can be helpful in explaining the communication process that exists in the classroom. As a matter of fact, they were initially developed by Galvin to explain communication events in any classroom setting.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Models

Communication models have many advantages. They enable us to view

[6]Raymond S. Ross, *Speech Communication Fundamentals and Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 8. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



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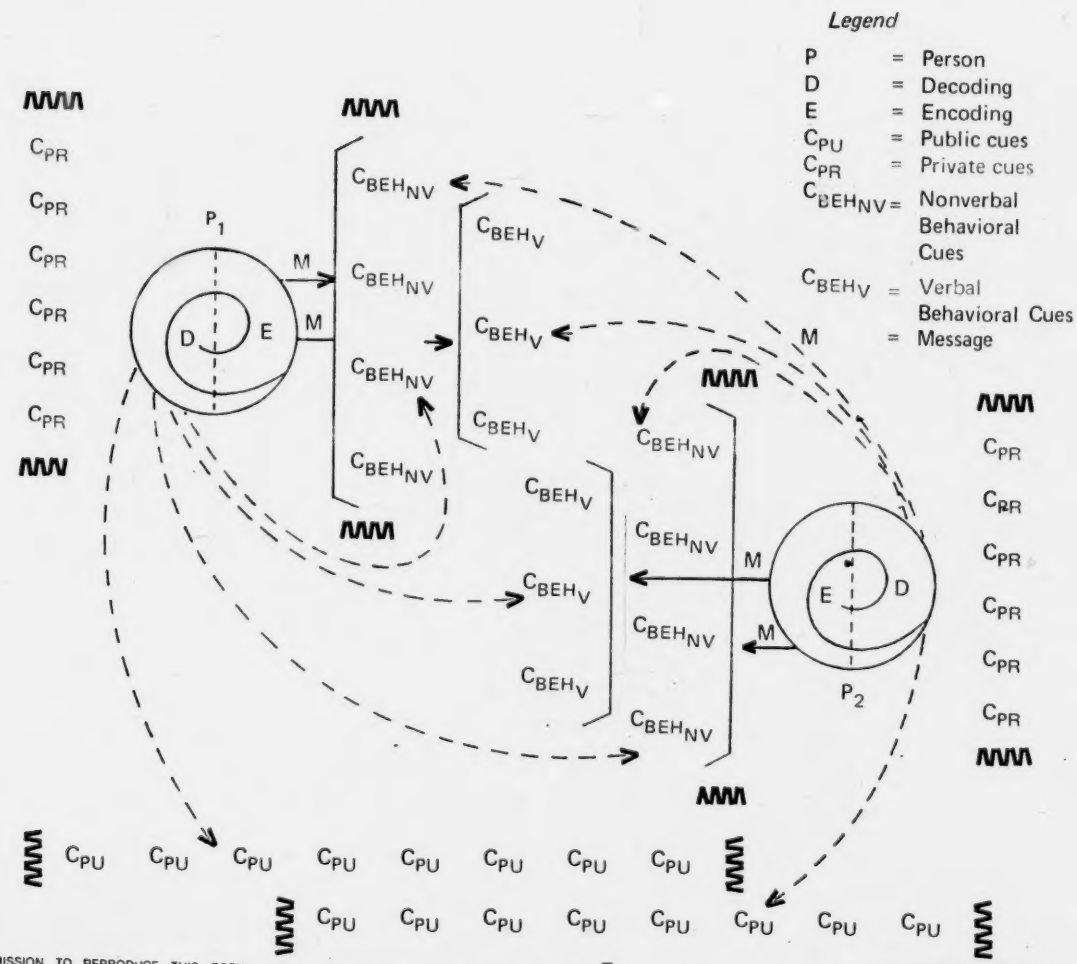
THE ROSS MODEL[6]

the entire communication process at a glance and to see how various elements of the process may relate to one another. They also permit us to go beyond the linear presentation of the process that writing requires. In addition, models permit us to deal with complicated events in a manner that often clarifies many intricate relationships. A major disadvantage of models is the fact that they readily simplify and distort the process that they represent. Of necessity, models leave out details, and some of these details may be crucial. Models may also exaggerate the importance of certain factors or variables because of the prominent location of those variables in the diagram.

It's important to remember that a model is never the process itself. Any particular model may clarify some things for us and distort other things. Its value to the researcher or theoretician is a function of the hypotheses it generates and the insights it provides. A teacher of interpersonal communication is likely to judge a model on the basis of its

[7]*Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies,* by Dean C. Barnlund, pp. 638-641. Copyright © Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



THE BARNLUND MODEL[7]

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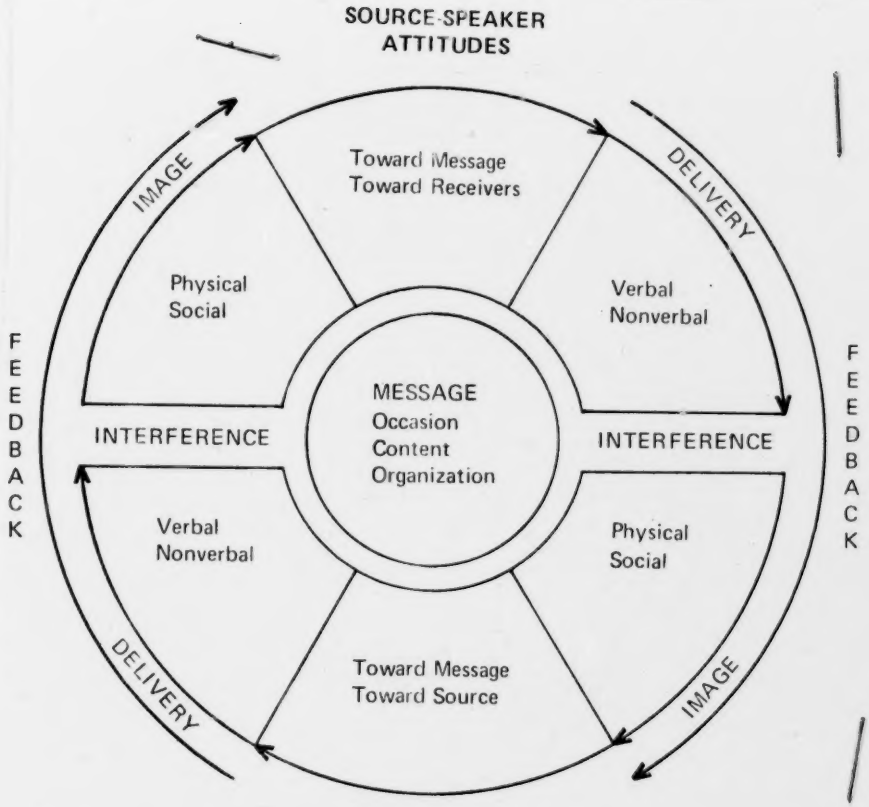


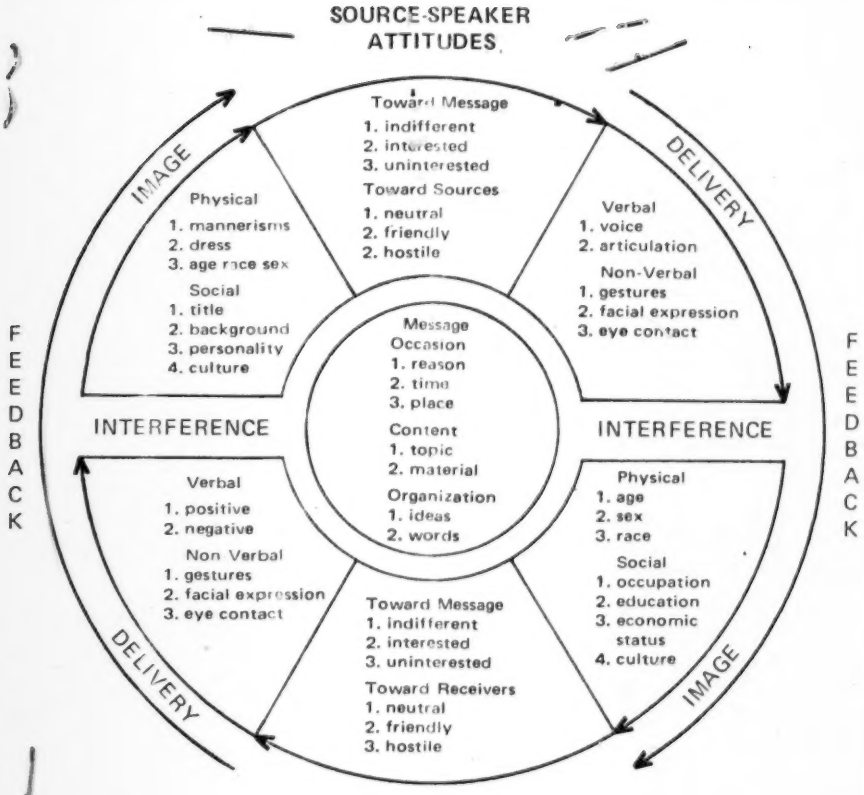
The Galvin Model (simplified) [8]

helpfulness to him and his students in understanding and talking about the interpersonal communication process. Incidentally, it is sometimes valuable to ask the students in an interpersonal class to develop their own model of the interpersonal communication process.

The models we have examined in this section identify some of the important concepts associated with interpersonal communication. A number of these concepts are explained in the following section.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

To develop a systematic understanding of an area of study and application, it is generally helpful to become acquainted with key concepts that are associated with that area. Some of the major concepts that are used



The Galvin Model (elaborated) [8]

to describe and analyze interpersonal communication are identified and briefly explained in this section.

Source. The individual who generates or "sends" a message is often referred to as a source. The source of a message can also be labelled a sender or decoder. Source may also refer to an event, a situation, or a context.

Message. Messages are essentially verbal and nonverbal cues or stimuli that are generated by a source and responded to by a receiver. Messages can consist of words, gestures, movements, inflections, and the like. They do not, however, have meaning independent of the persons involved in the interaction.

[8] Kathleen M. Galvin and Cassandra L. Book, *Speech Communication: An Interpersonal Approach for Teachers* (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1972), pp. 9, 10. Reprinted by permission of National Textbook Company.

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Receiver. An individual who listens to or receives a message encoded by a source is a receiver. Receivers are also referred to as encoders and as observers. Since interpersonal communication involves at least two individuals who are, in a sense, simultaneously sending and receiving messages, it is worthwhile to think of each participant in an interpersonal encounter as both a sender and a receiver.

Channel. Channel refers to the medium over which a message is transmitted. Verbal messages in a face-to-face setting involve seeing and touching. Channel is also used to identify a communication relationship. You may have a communication channel with some of your co-workers and not with others. In the latter sense, channel refers to the access one individual has to another.

Feedback. Feedback is a concept that has been helpful in describing the self-regulating behavior of machines and human beings. It refers essentially to a process by which any "system" adapts, adjusts, and changes. The process involves three basic steps: (1) observation of performance, (2) comparison of observed performance with intended performance, and (3) the use of this comparison to modify or guide present or future behavior. In an interpersonal communication setting, feedback processes are at work when communicators are sensitive to their reactions to each other and modify their behavior accordingly. The information each source receives about each receiver's reaction to the message he has generated or transmitted is called feedback. Changes in the source's behavior that are reactions to the feedback he has received are part of the total feedback process.

Information. Technically, information is the reduction of uncertainty. In a less formal sense, it is the knowledge that we acquire through our interaction with others by examining alternatives. If we know something we didn't know after communicating with someone, we can say that we have acquired information as a result of our encounter.

Meaning. Meaning is something that happens inside of us that consists of responding to the messages or stimuli that surround us. When two individuals are engaged in interpersonal communication, they are involved in a process of sharing meanings. We share meanings by attempting through communication to generate feelings and awarenesses inside the other person that are similar to our own.

Noise. Noise refers to "sources of error." It is a label for anything that interferes with the "accuracy" or purity of the message. Noise can be external or internal. A passing truck or an ambiguous phrase are examples of external noise. A stomach ache or anxiety are examples of internal states that can also interfere with message accuracy.

Symbol. A symbol is something that stands for something else. Words are symbols. The meaning of a symbol is determined by the individual who uses it. However, the individual responds to the messages of his cul-

ture to generate meanings for common symbols. There is no inherent relationship between a symbol and the event it stands for.

Sign. An event that has a single meaning is a sign. Traffic lights are signs and thunder is a sign.

Language. Language is a system of signs and symbols that is used to communicate. The language system that individuals use and the way they use it can have an important effect on the quality of their interaction.

Various models of the communication process have been examined and basic terminology or concepts associated with interpersonal communication have been identified and briefly explained. These models and concepts provide us with a way to identify communication events and to talk about them in a systematic, organized manner. In the following section we describe some strategies or approaches to interpersonal communication that allow us to obtain additional insight into the process of interpersonal communication.

APPROACHES TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

The Interpersonal Reflex

Before he became known for his involvement with drugs, Timothy Leary developed a scheme for analyzing interpersonal motives. According to Leary, interpersonal communication is purposive. The particular purpose of any communication act is determined by the kind of relationship one individual is attempting to establish with another. For example, if someone asks for help, he is likely to obtain or provoke help. If someone expresses skepticism, he is likely to obtain or provoke rejection. The following chart developed by Leary classifies interpersonal behavior into sixteen reflexes. The inner circle identifies reflex behaviors. The next circle, moving outward, describes the type of behavior each reflex is capable of provoking. The outer edge of the circle contains eight diagnostic categories.

Leary refers to interpersonal acts as reflexes because it is his assumption that many of the things we say in an interpersonal situation are expressed and responded to in a reflex fashion. The source or initiator of a message often purposely tries to generate a certain response from the other person, but the receiver's responses are generally reflex-like or automatic.

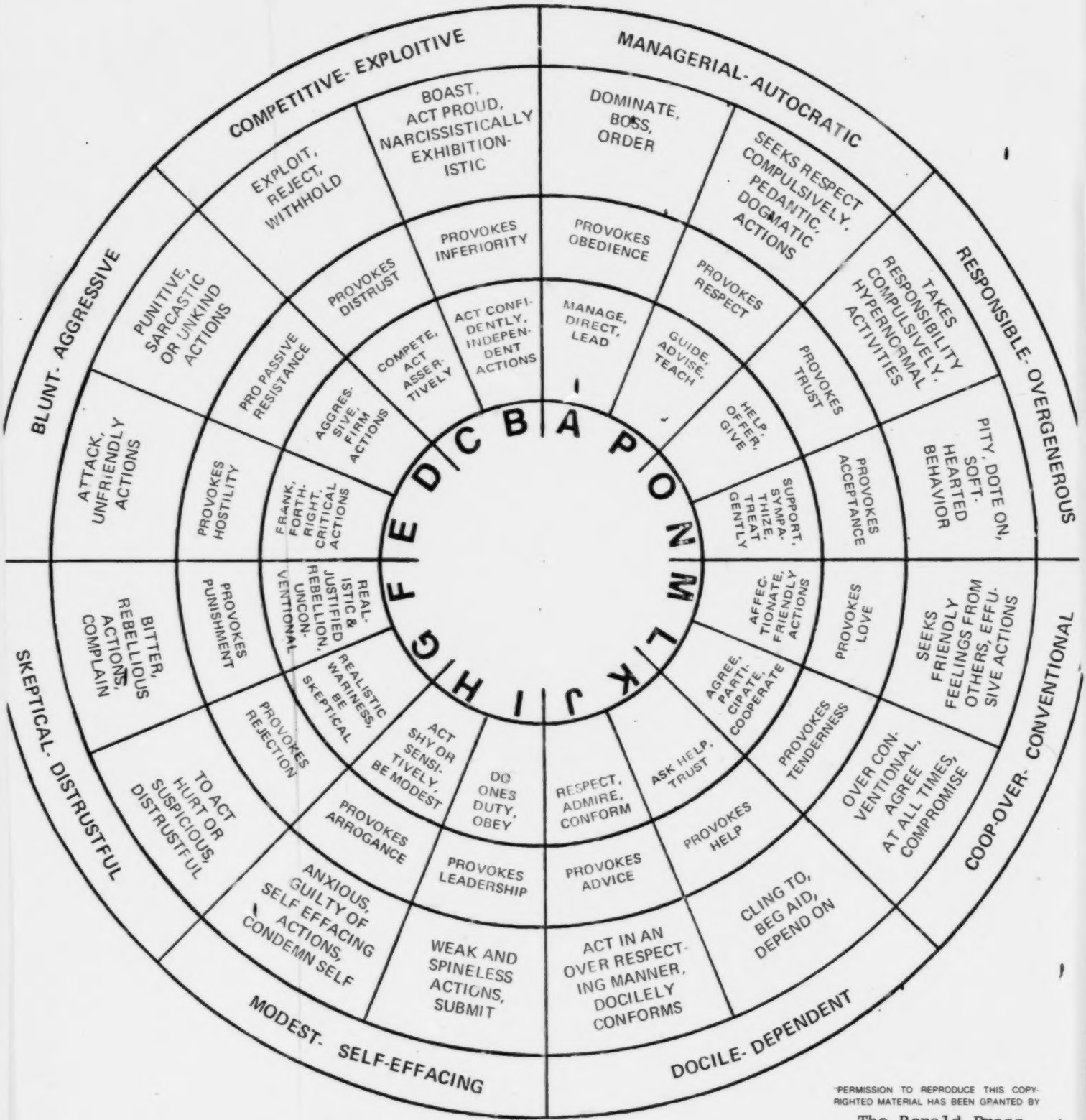
Interpersonal Needs

Schutz has developed a systematic approach to the understanding of interpersonal communication that is based upon interpersonal needs. Ac-

cording to Schutz, interpersonal needs can be divided into three categories: inclusion refers to the need to maintain a satisfactory relationship with others and to have enough involvement and belongingness; control is associated with the need for influence and power; and affection refers to the need for friendship, closeness, and love.[10] Each person's interpersonal needs are different. Some prefer a great deal of inclusion, some prefer very little, and most people are someplace in the middle. These same differences between people exist on the other two interpersonal need dimensions. An awareness of the interpersonal needs of individuals will enable us to better understand their communication behavior. If the

[9]Figure 1, page 65 from Timothy Leary, *Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality: A Functional Theory and Methodology for Personality Evaluation.* Copyright © 1957 The Ronald Press Company, New York.

[10]William C. Schutz. *FIRO: A Three-Dimensional Theory of Interpersonal Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960).



THE BASIC INTERPERSONAL REFLEXES[9]

17a

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interpersonal needs of individuals who are interacting with each other are incompatible or if they are not being satisfied, this lack of satisfaction or compatibility will have a profound effect on what these individuals say to one another. The communication of two individuals with high control needs, for example, might reflect an intense struggle to determine who will control whom. The communication of two individuals with low inclusion needs might be very passive and superficial. The Schutz system suggests that a successful interpersonal encounter is one where the interpersonal needs of the participants are satisfied.

Newcomb's A-B-X System[11]

Newcomb's approach to interpersonal communication is designed to explain the interaction that occurs between two individuals. According to Newcomb, the communication of individuals "A" and "B" can be explained by their need to achieve a state of balance with regard to each other and with regard to the object they are communicating about, "X." The reason communication occurs at all is because A must achieve some sort of orientation to B, to X, and to B's orientation to X so that he can achieve a sense of balance. If A discovers that B's orientation to the topic of conversation, X, is not similar to his own, he will be motivated to change B's orientation so that the "imbalance" can be overcome. B, of course, would have a similar goal with regard to A's orientation. The amount of influence A and B will exert on each other depends on how attracted they are to each other and on how strongly they feel about the topic, X.

Festinger's Theory of Social Comparison Processes[12]

When our opinions, attitudes, and beliefs can be checked out in some physical way, perhaps by measuring the length of something, it may not be necessary for us to interact much with others. However, according to Festinger, when our opinions, attitudes, and beliefs cannot be supported or verified by means of some simple measurement and when evidence can be found both to support and to contradict them, it becomes necessary for us to find support for our position by interacting with others. We engage in interpersonal communication, therefore, because of the need we have to compare our opinions, attitudes, and beliefs with those of others.

Festinger suggests that the pressure we feel to communicate about a topic increases if we become aware of some disagreement with regard to

[11] Theodore M. Newcomb, "An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts," *Psychological Review* 60 (1953): 393–404.

[12] Leon Festinger, "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes," *Human Relations* 7 (1954): 117–140.

that topic or if the importance of the topic becomes greater. If it appears as if the disagreement can be resolved, we will continue to communicate with the other person. However, we may terminate the conversation if we become convinced that there is little likelihood of changing the other person.

Social Exchange

Thibaut and Kelley see a relationship between interpersonal communication and the exchange of goods and services.[13] A similar point of view has been expressed by George C. Homans.[14] According to these authors, social exchange involves rewards and costs. If the rewards are not great enough, or if they are outshadowed by the costs, the interpersonal communication will either change considerably so that more reward can be obtained or the interaction will be brought to an end. Rewards and costs will determine who communicates with whom and what the interaction will be about. When two individuals are actively communicating with each other, they are likely to continue communicating until the rewards they obtain from the interaction drop below a certain level or the costs become too great. What actually constitutes rewards or costs depends upon the communication skills of the participants, their needs for power and dependency, and many other factors.

Sentiment, Activity, and Interaction

George C. Homans identifies three elements that are present when individuals get together to perform some task: sentiment, activity, and interaction. *Sentiment* refers to the needs that motivated the individuals to join one another as well as to the positive and negative feelings that the participants develop toward one another. *Activity* is the label given to the specific acts the participants perform that are related to their task. *Interaction* refers, among other things, to the interpersonal communication that inevitably occurs as the participants conduct their activities.

Activity, interaction, and sentiment are all interdependent. That is, an increase or decrease in any one element affects the other two. As the sentiments of liking and disliking that group members develop toward each other tend to become more intense, they begin to affect the interactions and activities of the participants and, in this way, interpersonal situations tend to become more elaborate or complicated over time.[15]

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[13] John W. Thibaut and Harold H. Kelley, *The Social Psychology of Groups* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959).

[14] George C. Homans, *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1961).

[15] George C. Homans, *The Human Group* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1950).

The Johari Window

The Johari window is an interesting way of describing the fact that individuals engaged in interpersonal communication are likely to reveal some things about themselves to each other and to hide other things from each other. The window is explained by Joseph Luft in his book *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics.*[16] The following diagram indicates that the window has four panels:

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	1	2
Not Known to Others	3	4

The Johari Window

Panel number 1 consists of those things individuals openly reveal to each other and to themselves when they communicate. Panel number 2 contains information that an individual communicates about himself that he doesn't know about himself. Panel number 3 refers to those things an individual knows about himself that he hides from others. Those things that individuals in interaction hide from themselves and from each other fall into panel number 4. The Johari window has been used, when appropriate, as a teaching device to encourage the expansion of behaviors associated with panel number 1, where individuals communicate freely and openly with one another, and to discourage interpersonal communication that is more restricted.

PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR

Principles are not sets of rules that tell us what to do or not to do in order to accomplish a specific task. Instead, they are global assertions and prescriptions that are general enough to provide insight into a wide variety of situations. They are designed to give us understanding and direction. When carefully and thoughtfully constructed, principles can be said to reflect the collective wisdom of the scholars and practitioners in a field. A number of principles of interpersonal communication that may be helpful to teachers and students of the subject are presented in this and the following two sections.

[16]Reprinted from *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics,* Second Edition (p. 11), by Joseph Luft by permission of National Press Books. Copyright © 1963, 1970 by Joseph Luft.

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Joseph Luft

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Over the years, a number of scholars interested in language-thought-behavior relationships have formulated principles that are designed to assist us in overcoming some of the obstacles to effective interpersonal communication that could result from a misunderstanding of the way language influences us. Here are some of the more prominent of these principles:

1. *The word is not the thing it represents.* Languages are maps, and a map is clearly not the territory that it represents. Yet, a failure to maintain a constant awareness of this principle can get us into difficulty in interpersonal situations. Feeling ill when someone describes his operation to us or rejecting someone because he has been labelled a "liar" or a "communist" by someone else are examples of map-territory confusions.

2. *Words don't mean, people mean.* Words have conventional meanings that reflect the way they have been used by many people in the past, but the only way to really know what a particular individual means when he uses a word, or what the word means to that individual when he listens to it, is to ask him. Checking a dictionary will not be of any help to us if the speaker (or listener) is not using or responding to the word the way others have in the past. Dictionaries, you see, merely record the way words are used by most people or the way they have been used in the past. The dictionary can never tell us what a particular person means by a word, because meanings are in people, not in words.

3. *Words are multiordinal.* An additional reason why dictionaries will not always help us in determining what someone meant by a particular word is that words are multiordinal, that is, most words have a number of different meanings and the dictionary will not tell us which meaning, if any, a particular speaker is using. The word *run,* for example, can refer to rapid movement, the action of a political candidate, a rip in a stocking, and so on.

4. *Language is self-reflexive.* A characteristic of language is the fact that we can always say more about anything. We can always talk about our talking. Wendell Johnson reported an example of self-reflexiveness provided by the late comedian Bob Burns. Bob Burns would occasionally tell about a relative of his who invented a spot remover to remove the spots left by spot removers. The implication of self-reflexiveness is that we can begin to distort reality very quickly when we talk about our talking and then talk about our talk about our talking. Unless we are careful, much of our interpersonal communication can wind up having very little to do with anything in the real world.

5. *We can never say or know all about anything.* If we waited until all of the information was in before taking action, we would never do

anything. The fact that we can never know or say all about anything is easy to understand. Yet, we often talk as if we know all there is to know when we make judgments on the basis of very limited evidence. An awareness that we can never know all or tell all should make our interaction a little more cautious and realistic.

PRINCIPLES OF PERCEPTION

Interpersonal communication often involves the sharing of perceptions about objects and events. Furthermore, the perceptions that the interacting participants have of one another have a strong influence on the way they communicate. The following principles of perception are designed to provide insight into some of the problems associated with the perception of people and events.

1. *The world is a product of the perceiver as well as the perceived.* Every perception is a combination of the events "out there" and those things that are happening inside our skin. Our tensions, past experiences, values, needs, desires, worries, and many other internal factors influence what we see or hear. The following figures taken from *The Dynamics of Human Communication* by Myers and Myers[17] demonstrate this fact. Whether we see a goblet or two faces in figure 1 or a young lady or an old woman in figure 2 is a function of the figures themselves and the things that are going on inside of us when we look at them.
2. *Perception involves leaving out details.* Anything that we perceive is an abstraction of the event itself. By abstraction we mean that details are left out. Some of the details are too small for us to see. Others are hidden from us because we cannot be on all sides of an object at once. The important point is that we can only see part of an object and, as a result, some distortion in perception is inevitable. Our perceptions of people are likely to be even more distorted because of all of the things going on inside of the people that we cannot perceive directly.
3. *Most perception is selective.* All of our senses have become limited. Certain sounds are too high or too low for humans to hear; some objects are too close, too far, too big, or too small for us to see; all of our senses are limited to events that occur within certain ranges of intensity. As a result our perceptions are selective. We cannot perceive those things that our senses are incapable of responding to.

   Psychological factors also cause us to be selective in our perceptions. If we are hungry, we are more likely to notice food; if we are

[17] Gail E. Myers and Michele T. Myers, *The Dynamics of Human Communication: A Laboratory Approach* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 20. Reprinted by permission of the publisher from Roy F. Street, *A Gestalt Completion Test.* (New York: Teachers College Press, Copyright 1931 by Teachers College, Columbia University)

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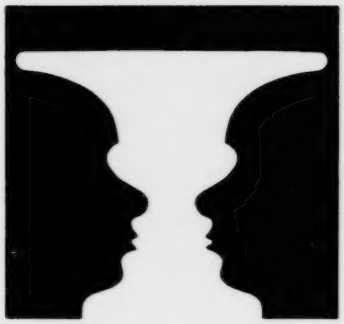


Figure 1. Which do you see, the goblet or the famous twins?

Figure 2. Do you see both an old woman and a young woman in this drawing?

planning to buy a new suit, we may suddenly begin to pay more attention to what other people are wearing; if we teach voice and diction, we may notice certain things about the person we are interacting with that others would not respond to. Since perception is selective, two individuals observing the "same" event may see and respond to quite different events.

The principles we have presented thus far suggest that our language habits and our perceptions can have a strong influence on our interpersonal communication. We now turn to some principles of the communication process as a whole.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

A number of generalizations can be made about the communication process. In some cases these generalizations can be supported by research findings. In most instances they reflect a position or a theoretical point of view that seems to be helpful in understanding communication events.

1. *Communication is a process.* The belief that communication should be viewed as a dynamic process rather than as something static has been expressed quite effectively by David K. Berlo:

   A communication theorist rejects the possibility that nature consists

of events or ingredients that are separable from all other events. He argues that you cannot talk about *the* beginning or *the* end of communication or say that a particular idea came from one specific source, that communication occurs in only one way, and so on.[18]

2. *Communication is inevitable.* One cannot not communicate. The failure to say something in response to a message communicates a great deal. When two or more people are together, they are constantly communicating with one another, even during periods of silence. This principle clearly implies that communication involves a great deal more than the encoding and decoding of overt verbal messages. Communication can be viewed as the generation of meanings and all of us generate meanings in ourselves and in others all of the time.

3. *Communication is continuous.* If we view communication as the generation of meanings, then we would have to agree that internal communication processes—that is, intrapersonal communication processes—never stop. Even during sleep, intrapersonal communication continues to operate. As the previous principle indicates, not only does intrapersonal communication never stop, but interpersonal communication is continuous as well.

4. *Communication is irreversible.* Once something is communicated in an interpersonal situation it cannot be erased or "taken back." A commitment we can't live up to, a slur that we "didn't mean," even a hostile glance that we immediately regret—all become part of the record. It is possible, of course, to deny that we meant what we said or to insist that our facial expressions or remarks were misinterpreted, but such defenses or denials can only provide new information for others to consider, not change the past.

5. *A major purpose of communication is more communication.* We often say things to one another in order to sustain the communication relationship. In such instances, the content of our messages is less important than the fact that we are maintaining the communication channels that we have established. We sometimes refer to such communication about nonconsequential matters as "small talk." Malinowski called it "phatic communion."[19] Small talk or phatic communication is a substitute for silence, and, since it keeps the channels "open," it tends to make it easier for us to communicate about more serious topics when matters of substance need to be discussed.

6. *Interpersonal communication occurs on more than one level.* When

[18]David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 24. See also, John W. Keltner, *Elements of Interpersonal Communication* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), p. 7.

[19]Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Language," in *The Meaning of Meaning*, Eighth Edition, by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1946), p. 315.

most people observe or talk about the communication of two or more individuals, they generally focus on the content of the messages they hear; that is, they respond to the specific ideas that are being discussed or the attitudes and opinions that are being expressed. However, every communication situation includes messages of a different nature, as well. These are messages *about* the content messages. Such messages are referred to as metacommunication, because they consist of communication about communication. Metacommunication includes facial expressions, vocal inflections, intensity, and other nonverbal events that tell us how to interpret the words we hear. Messages on a metacommunicative level also tell us something about the relationships that exist among the communicators. They may tell us, for example, about the relative status of the communicators, whether some individuals are being controlled by others, how the communicators view one another, how they view themselves, and the like.

7. *Our self-concept is affected by and affects our interpersonal communication.* The way we see ourselves is to a large extent a function of the way others respond to us. And we become aware of the responses of others through our interpersonal communication. If people seek us out, if they tell us that they like us, if they respond to our remarks in an enthusiastic way, we are likely to perceive ourselves in a more positive way than we would if others avoided us, told us that they did not like us, and responded to us in a negative and hostile manner. We are not trying to suggest that others are always accurate in their perceptions of us, or that we ought to see ourselves the way others see us. The responses that others have to us might tell us a great deal about them and practically nothing about ourselves. This would especially be true if we were the victims of stereotyping and prejudice. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid being influenced by the people with whom we interact.

   We have pointed out that our self-concept is affected by the way others communicate with us. In addition, our self-concept influences the way we communicate with others. If our self-concept is positive, we are more likely to express ourselves in a confident and aggressive way than if our self-concept is not positive. The way we see ourselves often influences what we say and how we say it. It also has an effect on the way we respond to the remarks of others. Some of us might be much more willing to criticize someone who has a positive self-concept than someone with a negative self-concept who might not be able to "take it."

8. *Physical setting can have an important influence on interpersonal communication.* In recent years, communication specialists have become increasingly aware of the effect that architecture, the arrangement of chairs, the shape of a table, and many other physical factors can have on communication. A study by Mele Koneya demonstrated

that students who are placed near the center of a classroom are more likely to participate in a teacher-led discussion than students who are placed near the sides of the room.[20] Kenneth Nations discovered that who communicates with whom in a government organization is related to the location of offices and the shape of the corridors that lead to the various offices.[21] Physical factors may not always be important determinants of the interpersonal communication that takes place between two or more people, but they should not be ignored.

The principles of language, perception, and communication that have been presented in this section provide an overview of the interpersonal communication process. They also give us a systematic way of understanding and explaining some of the things that happen when individuals engage in interpersonal communication. In a much less direct manner, the principles also suggest certain ways in which interpersonal communication processes can be improved. But the question of how interpersonal communication can be improved is much too important to treat indirectly only. This is especially true in a publication, such as this one, that is concerned with the teaching of interpersonal communication. Teachers of interpersonal communication are interested in helping their students understand the process, but they are interested in skill development as well. That is, they want their students to become more effective communicators in interpersonal situations. Much of the remainder of this book is devoted to just that goal. A variety of teaching approaches and strategies are presented that teachers can use to help their students improve their interpersonal skills. However, before those strategies and approaches are discussed, we will examine some prevalent ideas about what constitutes effective interpersonal communication. After all, we really can't suggest strategies for improving interpersonal communication without presenting some information about what it is that we are trying to achieve. The following section, then, takes a look at what we mean by good interpersonal communication.

GOOD INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

In the following sections, we will make many value judgments. We are going to identify what we and others who are interested in teaching communication skills and behaviors consider to be good interpersonal

[20] Mele Koneya, "Relationship between Verbal Interaction and Seat Location of Members of Large Groups," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1973.

[21] Kenneth Nations, "Informal Communication among Research Scientists: The Influence of Architectural Design," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1972.

communication. We have relied upon the following criteria in making our judgments:

1. Traditional and contemporary standards employed by speech communication teachers and scholars who are interested in identifying good communication.
2. Standards used by psychotherapists to identify speech communication that is likely to be healthy and therapeutic.
3. Standards suggested by research findings related to the communication behavior of effective and ineffective individuals, groups, and organizations.
4. Standards suggested by our observations and experience. To begin our discussion of good interpersonal communication we will examine some of the values that have been associated with effective communication.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION VALUES

Openness. Openness is a value that many teachers associate with good interpersonal communication because they are convinced that under most circumstances in which we wish to establish a wholesome interpersonal relationship, open communication is better than a situation in which we try to hide our true thoughts and feelings. There are times, of course, when, in order to be discreet or to avoid hurting another person, we refrain from saying anything or we "lie a little." But the fact that there are times when it is important and necessary to be diplomatic does not in any way alter the fact that in the long run and under most circumstances, openness will result in a healthier relationship than polite diplomacy.

Spontaneity. There is no effective way to respond to the command "be spontaneous." No matter how creatively we react, the fact that our behavior is a response to someone's request suggests that we are not being completely spontaneous. Nevertheless, spontaneous interaction, that is, interaction that accurately reflects the immediate and genuine reactions of the participants to one another, will result in better interpersonal relationships than interaction that is cautious, inhibited, and preplanned. There are many communication situations, of course, that require careful preparation. Some formal public speaking tasks, for example, demand careful preparation and well-rehearsed expression. However, most *interpersonal* communication situations call for freedom and spontaneity. Anyone who has ever tried to interact freely with a salesman who responded with "canned speeches" knows how painful non-spontaneity can be.

Here and Now. Much of our conversation deals with the past and with

the future. It is often rewarding to share past experiences or to talk about situations that we are anticipating. However, there are times when we look "backward" or "forward" in order to avoid having to deal with the reactions that we are having to the immediate interpersonal situation. "Flight" prevents us from taking full advantage of the present and interferes with our ability to develop a better understanding of one another. When we focus on the here and now and share our reactions to the present, there is a greater likelihood that we will develop a stronger and better interpersonal relationship.

Authenticity. Authenticity in interpersonal communication involves a willingness to acknowledge our own ideas, thoughts, and feelings and to communicate them, when appropriate, frankly and without distortion. It is not easy to be authentic or honest with ourselves and with others, and there are occasions when discretion is required. Nevertheless, authentic communication should be encouraged in most situations.

Self-Disclosure. Closely associated with the values of honesty and leveling is self-disclosure. Self-disclosure requires that we reveal our thoughts attitudes, beliefs, and feelings so that others can get to know us as we really are. Self-disclosure can result in disagreement and conflict, but the conflict can have some worthwhile outcomes. By acknowledging our differences we are in a position to resolve them, and the process of resolution can improve our interpersonal relationships.

Empathy. Empathy refers to our ability to accurately understand another individual. It is the skill of putting ourselves in the "other person's shoes" and accurately identifying his or her feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and the like. Empathy is not easy to achieve. Often, what we believe is empathy turns out to be little more than the projection of our own thoughts and feelings onto the other person. But difficulty in achieving empathy does not make it any less important a value. There are probably few experiences more profound than being understood.

Acceptance. Being understood can be an extremely worthwhile experience. On the other hand, understanding coupled with rejection could be very painful. In addition to being understood, most of us want to feel accepted. The ability to genuinely communicate our acceptance of another person is a valuable interpersonal skill.

Warmth. Closely associated with acceptance is the ability to communicate a positive regard and a feeling of warmth for another person. The awareness that we are regarded warmly by another person permits most of us to communicate in a more genuine and relaxed manner with that person.

Trust. Trust is an essential ingredient in an interpersonal relationship, and Morton Deutsch suggests that trust is most likely to develop among

individuals who are genuinely concerned about each other's welfare.[22] In his analysis of the literature on trust, Kim Giffin isolated the following five factors that seem to influence a listener's trust of a speaker:

1. A speaker's *expertness,* as shown by his perceived intelligence and/or authoritativeness.
2. A speaker's *character,* as shown by the congruence of his perceived value systems with those of his listener.
3. A speaker's *good will,* as shown by the listener's perception of his intent to communicate propositions and information that he (the speaker) considers most valid and reliable.
4. A speaker's *dynamism* or *activity,* as shown by the listener's perception of such things as aggressiveness, strength, interest in the listener, forcefulness, and swiftness.
5. A speaker's *personal attraction,* as shown by the listener's perception of his likeability, sociability, cheerfulness, kindliness, and friendliness.[23]

Acceptance of Feelings. There is a general tendency in our culture to deny or minimize the importance of feelings and to stress logic and ideas. Ideas and the ability to deal with them in a systematic way are extremely important in interpersonal communication. However, problems often occur in an interpersonal situation because of a refusal to acknowledge and adequately deal with the feelings of the participants. Therefore, teachers of interpersonal communication place great value on the open expression of feelings and on the ability to deal with the feelings of others, once they are expressed.

Listening. In the past, speech communication teachers placed so much stress on speaking skills that they tended at times to ignore the importance of good listening. Today, however, the importance of listening is widely recognized by instructors of traditional speech communication subjects and by teachers of interpersonal communication as well.

In a public speaking situation, it may be worthwhile to listen critically, analytically, perhaps even defensively. But in an interpersonal setting where there is an emphasis on openness and the communication of feelings, the listener has an obligation to do more than merely defend himself against poor logic or inaccurate statements. Instead, listening involves the understanding of the attitudes, feelings, and point of view of the speaker and the reflection of that understanding so that the speaker knows that he has been understood. It is not necessary to agree with someone that one understands, but it is important in an interpersonal

[22]Morton Deutsch, "Trust and Suspicion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2(1958): 265–279.

[23]Kim Giffin, "The Contribution of Studies of Source Credibility to a Theory of Interpersonal Trust in the Communication Process," *Psychological Bulletin* 68(1967): 104–120.

relationship that is worth sustaining that we listen for understanding and not for purposes of rejection or interpersonal combat.[24]

A number of values associated with good interpersonal communication have been discussed. It has been pointed out that teachers of interpersonal communication stress the importance of such standards as openness, honesty, leveling, self-disclosure, warmth, empathy, acknowledgment of feelings, and effective listening. By combining these values with the insights into the interpersonal communication process that are provided by the various communication models and systematic approaches presented earlier, as well as with the findings of communication research scholars, it is possible to formulate principles of effective or good interpersonal communication. A number of these principles of good communication are presented in the following section.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Speech communication scholars have traditionally been concerned with prescription. By prescription, we mean a body of advice or suggestions designed to help others improve their communication behavior. In a sense, then, the principles that are presented in this section represent prescriptions for achieving better interpersonal communication. We begin by examining some of the conclusions reached by Evelyn Sieburg, who has conducted an elaborate and profound inquiry into the subject of confirmation.[25]

Principles of Confirmation

When we interact with a person, some of our communication behaviors serve to confirm that person, and some of our behaviors tend to disconfirm that person. Confirming behaviors are those that cause the other person to value himself or herself as an individual, and disconfirming behaviors cause the other person to question his or her self-worth. Generally a healthy or positive interpersonal situation is one in which the participants' experience is a confirming one. Evelyn Sieburg's research has generated a great deal of insight into confirming and disconfirming

[24] For further reading, see John W. Keltner, *Elements of Interpersonal Communication* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), Chapter 7; and Larry L. Barker, *Listening Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

[25] Evelyn Sieburg, "Dysfunctional Communication and Interpersonal Responsiveness in Small Groups" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1969). Reprinted by permission of Evelyn Sieburg. See also Alvin Goldberg and Carl Larson, *Group Communication* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, in press).

communication. Here are some of the conclusions that can be drawn from Sieburg's investigations:

1. *It is more confirming to be recognized as existing than to be treated as non-existing.* Did you ever get the feeling in a social situation that you really weren't *there?* Unfortunately, most of us at one time or another interact with other people whose responses to us suggest almost a total lack of understanding or awareness of the things that we are saying. In such situations we feel disconfirmed, but not because others disagree with us. The disconfirmation occurs because the remarks of others reflect so little understanding of our own remarks that the interaction results in no confirmation of our existence.
2. *Dialogue is more confirming than monologue.* When two individuals take turns saying things in each other's presence without actually responding in an honest and spontaneous way to each other's ideas and feelings, their interaction might be described as a series of monologues rather than as a dialogue. Dialogue requires a genuine involvement with the other person. To engage in dialogue we must be willing to compare the ideas, opinions, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes of others with our own and to work at the resolving of the differences that we encounter.
3. *Acceptance is more confirming than interpretation.* A third principle of confirmation developed by Sieburg is related to the difference between showing somebody acceptance and interpreting that person's remarks. When we respond to the statements of another person by genuinely trying to understand the thoughts and feelings he or she has expressed and by reflecting that understanding in our responses, we are showing acceptance. Interpretation consists of drawing inferences and reaching conclusions about the other person's remarks that go far beyond anything that person thought that he or she had expressed.
4. *It is more confirming to be treated personally than impersonally.* A personal response to the remarks of others involves a concern for the feelings expressed and not just for the content of the remarks. It also involves a reaction to the particular needs and interests of the other person. The differences between personal and impersonal responses can often be seen in the language that is used. Impersonal responses are much more formal, contain fewer personal pronouns, and are more indirect than personal responses.

Disconfirming Responses

Here are some of the ways that two individuals in interaction disconfirm each other:

1. *Impervious response.* An impervious response to something we have just said is one that fails to recognize the remarks we just made.

2. *Interrupting response.* When the other person begins to talk before we have finished what we are saying, the response is an interrupting one.

3. *Irrelevant response.* An irrelevant response to something we have said is one that seems to have nothing to do with the ideas or feelings that we just expressed.

4. *Tangential response.* When someone responds to our remarks by acknowledging what we just said and then quickly shifting to a new and quite different topic, the response is tangential. In a sense, a tangential response is a more polite way of "taking the rug out from under us." It also tends to be less disconfirming because it involves a recognition of our communication.

5. *Impersonal response.* An impersonal response is one that makes us feel as if we are part of a large audience. Although the setting is an interpersonal one, the individual we are talking with responds to us with a speech that seems designed not for us, but for anyone who will listen. An impersonal response is similar to an abstract monologue and tends to give us the impression that the person we are interacting with has very little genuine involvement with us.

6 *Incoherent response.* A response that contains appropriate inflections and that appears on the surface to be a reasonable reaction to something we said, but that doesn't make much sense at all on the content level, is an incoherent response. An incoherent response has form but very little substance. It is also likely to contain such cliches as "you know," "like," and so on.

7. *Incongruous response.* Occasionally, the way someone responds to our remarks speaks louder than what that person's words actually say to us. "I had a good time at your party" spoken without conviction, or "Who's hostile? I'm not hostile!" shouted in anger, are examples of incongruous responses. When there is little goodness or fit between what an individual says and how he or she says it, the response is incongruous.

Confirming Responses

1. *Direct acknowledgment.* When we recognize the other person's remarks and react directly to them by saying something that represents a direct response to those remarks, we confirm that person through direct acknowledgment.

2. *Agreement about content.* When we agree with the ideas, attitudes, opinions, or beliefs expressed by another person, our response is a confirming one. However, our response would not be a disconfirming one if we disagreed with the other person. Disagreement may not be

confirming, but since it clearly acknowledges the other person's communication, it is not disconfirming either.

3. *Supportive response.* When we support another person by responding to his or her statements with understanding and reassurance, our responses are confirming.
4. *Clarifying response.* A clarifying response can either focus on the content of the other person's remarks or on the feelings that are being expressed. We clarify by elaborating on what the other person has said, by asking for more information, and by saying something that enables the other person to expand on his or her remarks.
5. *Expression of positive feeling.* Positive expressions of feeling in response to the statements of others are confirming. "I like your ideas" or "I'm excited about your plans" are examples of positive feeling responses.

We have devoted so much attention to the matter of confirmation and disconfirmation because the work of Evelyn Sieburg has demonstrated that confirmation is essential to effective interpersonal communication. In our consideration of the principles of language behavior earlier in this publication we pointed out that language is an important ingredient in the interpersonal communication process. We now turn to some principles related to the effective use of language in interpersonal situations. These principles are based upon the writings of Alfred Korzybski, Irving J. Lee, Wendell Johnson, Elwood Murray, and others who have been interested in the relationships between language, thought, and behavior.

Principles of Language Behavior and Effective Interpersonal Communication

1. *Communicators should recognize that there will always be more to say.* The nature of language and of reality is such that we can always say more about anything. No topic is ever exhausted, and this is especially true in an interpersonal situation where we are likely to discuss a variety of matters in a relatively spontaneous and unsystematic manner. Hence, it is important during interpersonal communication to maintain an awareness of our inability to base any conclusions we reach on a thorough consideration of all of the facts. Such an awareness should enable us to avoid becoming too rigid or dogmatic or close-minded in our positions and attitudes. Every conclusion we reach should be viewed as tentative and subject to revision. Our interpersonal communication is likely to be enhanced whenever we can keep it open and flexible.
2. *Communicators should clarify their meanings.* It is common in an interpersonal situation to assume that others are using words the way we generally use them, but this may not always be true. "I parked

my car far away" might mean half a block to one person and half a mile to another. "Sally had three drinks at the party" might suggest to some that Sally drinks too much and to others that she does not overindulge. It is perfectly acceptable to ask someone what he or she means by something or to elaborate on our own remarks when others appear to be misinterpreting us. Problems are most likely to arise when we naively assume that there is no need for clarification or elaboration because everyone understands the words that are being used. One reason why our interpersonal communication is redundant—why we repeat our feelings and ideas—is that we tend to recognize the fact that further clarification is necessary if we are to avoid being misunderstood.

3. *Communicators should attempt to date and index their references.* In November 1972 Richard M. Nixon, after winning the presidency by more than sixty percent of the vote, was not the same person that he was in May 1973, when he appeared on television to explain his role and position with regard to the Watergate scandal. Yet our language allows us to talk about Nixon without any reference to time or situation. Clearly, Nixon "1972" is not the same as Nixon "1952" or Nixon "1973." People and events change, and to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity in our interpersonal relationships, it is wise to qualify our references by dating and indexing them. Dating might simply consist of letting people know the period we are referring to by stating the date or time. Indexing refers to any acknowledgment of the fact that we are using a term in a particular way. For example, the word *silence* could refer to the quiet that exists in an interpersonal situation when the participants are calm, relaxed, and satisfied. It also could refer to a state of frustration in which no one knows what to say, a state of fear in which the participants are afraid to say anything, a state of awe in which the participants are at a loss for words, and so on. By indexing the word, that is, by clarifying our particular use of the word *silence,* we can reduce ambiguity and communicate more effectively.

4. *Communicators should differentiate between statements of fact and value judgments.* Many of our assertions refer to facts that can be observed by others and that are capable of verification. "The supermarket price of meat has gone up" or "The population of River City has increased over the past ten years" are examples of factual statements. But such statements as "The steak is too well done" or "River City is overpopulated" are value judgments that tell us as much about the person making the statement as they do about the events being judged. Difficulties can arise where we treat judgments as if they are facts and fail to recognize that they represent a point of view. Some of these difficulties can be avoided by using the phrase "to me" whenever we make value judgments. This phrase clearly establishes

the fact that the speaker is revealing something about himself or herself and is presenting a point of view.

Judgments or evaluations seem to get us into difficulty. Carl Rogers once suggested that the greatest barrier to interpersonal communication is the tendency to judge or evaluate others. Since interpersonal evaluation appears to be such a crucial factor in interpersonal communication, we turn now to an examination of some principles of evaluation.

EVALUATION

"Personal growth," Carl Rogers has written, "is hindered and hampered rather than enhanced by external evaluation." According to Rogers, it does not matter if the evaluation is favorable or unfavorable. "Any evaluation interferes with the development of a more mature, responsible, or socialized self."[26] Thomas Gordon and others also believe that evaluation is harmful to the interpersonal communication process. According to this position, individuals in a non-evaluative atmosphere will exhibit a creativeness and a quality of interpersonal communication that will be superior to their behavior under other circumstances. The research conducted by the present authors into the effects of evaluation has tended, generally, to support the Rogerian position, but not in an extreme way. Not *all* evaluation is harmful. The following principles of evaluation in interpersonal communication are based upon research findings in this area.

1. *Evaluation should be avoided in interpersonal communication when we want to encourage the participants to assume more responsibility for their own behavior.* When we compare individuals involved in interpersonal communication who have been evaluated by external observers with those who have not been evaluated or engaged in evaluation, we discover that non-evaluation generates greater personal responsibility. That is, individuals who have not been evaluated are more likely to judge themselves instead of relying as heavily on the judgments of others to determine how well they are doing.
2. *Non-evaluated individuals will feel better understood by others than negatively evaluated individuals, but less understood than individuals who are positively evaluated by their fellow communicators.* The evidence indicates that if we want people to feel understood, we should avoid having teachers or observers evaluate them either positively or negatively. However, it is worthwhile, if we wish to generate a feeling of being understood, to encourage participants to evaluate each other positively.

[26]Carl R. Rogers, *Client-Centered Therapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), p. 417.

3. *Non-evaluated individuals will feel greater acceptance than negatively evaluated individuals, but less acceptance than positively evaluated individuals.* If we want individuals to feel accepted, we should see to it that they are not evaluated at all, or, better yet, that they receive positive evaluations. It does not matter if the positive evaluations come from external observers or from the communicators themselves. Regardless of source, positive evaluation results in greater feelings of acceptance.

4. *Communicators who avoid evaluating each other will experience less threat than communicators who evaluate each other negatively.* Positive or negative evaluations from an external source do not seem to affect the amount of threat that communicators feel. But when individuals engaged in interaction evaluate each other negatively, the threat level goes up. Therefore, to avoid threat in interpersonal situations, the communicators should be encouraged to avoid evaluating each other negatively.

Our consideration of evaluation and its effects suggests that the communication of value judgments in an interpersonal situation can have important consequences. An additional factor that has a powerful influence on the communication process is the atmosphere in which the communication takes place. Some interpersonal atmospheres are cooperative and others are competitive. In the following section we will examine some of the differences between cooperative and competitive atmospheres and the effects such atmospheres can have on the resolution of conflict.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Morton Deutsch has done considerable research on conflict and its resolution. Among other things, Deutsch has found that conflict resolution in interpersonal situations is influenced by the atmosphere in which the communication takes place. According to Deutsch, a cooperative atmosphere or process involves communication that is open and honest. All of the participants in such a setting want to inform each other and to be informed. A competitive atmosphere, on the other hand, is one in which the participants try to avoid giving information or one in which the information they share is deliberately misleading. Clearly, a competitive atmosphere is likely to generate more interpersonal conflict and to result in less conflict resolution than a cooperative atmosphere. The following principles suggested by the writings of Morton Deutsch deal with the resolution of conflict in interpersonal situations.

1. *It is better to focus on conflicts over small issues than over large issues.* When we become involved in a controversy with others, it is to our advantage to focus, at least initially, on smaller areas of dis-

agreement rather than larger ones. If we deal with smaller issues first, we are more likely to reach agreement, and it will be easier for us to maintain a cooperative atmosphere.

2. *In interpersonal conflict situations it is better to recognize the differences in power and ability that exist between the participants than to ignore or minimize these differences.* Although this principle of conflict resolution may disturb those of us who like to look for similarities between people and not differences, it is more difficult to resolve an interpersonal conflict when all of the participants view themselves as equal. It is easier to give in to an authority figure or to someone of clearly superior ability than it is to give in to someone who is quite similar to us.

3. *To resolve a conflict it is better to avoid problem definitions or problem solutions that threaten the self-esteem of the participants.* Self-esteem refers to the personal judgment we make about ourselves in terms of our own worthiness. If the solution to a conflict will require us to shift our self-esteem in a negative direction, we will resist that solution more than we would if its adoption left our self-esteem intact. Conflict resolution is much easier in an interpersonal situation when we recognize that it is important to help the other participants "save face." The self-esteem of individuals who have little basis for self-confidence is easily threatened. Therefore, anything that helps participants become more self-confident will ultimately be helpful in conflict resolution.

4. *It is best to avoid solutions to a conflict that allow important concerns of the participants to remain unresolved.* If the resolution of a conflict requires that we try to hide or repress some of our concerns, these still unresolved matters might manifest themselves later in a variety of ways that might be disruptive. Repression does not eliminate a problem, it merely postpones it. A solution to a conflict that does not involve repression will be a stronger and healthier solution in the long run.

5. *Some interpersonal conflicts are best handled by avoiding them.* It is more virtuous in most cases to deal with a problem directly rather than to avoid it. But some problems reflect such intense and deep-seated disturbance that our best hope is to contain or to ignore the problem because there is so little likelihood of resolving it if it is brought to the surface. Although we do not advocate avoidance as a general approach or practice, some problems are of such a magnitude that they are better left undisturbed and unresolved.[27]

In our opinion, no one has generated a set of principles of effective

[27]Morton Deutsch and R. M. Krauss, *Theories in Social Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1965).

interpersonal communication that are as comprehensive and as helpful as the principles developed by Dean C. Barnlund. Barnlund's principles focus on the ingredients that make up a "constructive communicative relationship." They are listed below and can also be found in the introduction to the section on "Therapeutic Communication" in Barnlund's book entitled *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies.*

1. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when there is willingness to become involved with the other person.* When students who are graduating from high school or college are asked to identify the best teachers they had, they often identify teachers who were available or accessible to them. The willingness to become involved with another person can be more important at times than the quality of the interaction itself. Knowing that someone who is important to you cares enough about you to devote time to the relationship and to focus on matters of mutual interest can make quite a difference.
2. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when one or both persons convey positive regard for the other.* Positive regard for another person is expressed not so much by the specific content of our remarks when we interact as it is by the general way we treat that person. If we are manipulative, if we attempt to control or to coerce the other person, if we prevent the other person from saying or doing things that displease us, then we are not displaying positive regard. Positive regard for another person can be said to exist when we treat that person with a basic respect and as a person of integrity regardless of the specific things that person says or does.
3. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when a permissive psychological climate develops.* A permissive psychological climate is not necessarily one in which individuals agree with and praise everything that everyone says or does. However, it is one in which the emphasis is on understanding rather than on judging the behavior of others. Furthermore, a permissive climate is one in which the love that we have for others and the acceptance that we show them are not withdrawn whenever their behavior displeases us.
4. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when there is the desire and the capacity to listen.* Listening is not a passive process. It requires commitment and the capacity to focus on many of the things that the speaker is saying with his words, inflections, voice, facial expressions, and the like. Effective listening requires that we respond to the content of the message and the metacommunication, or the information about the message, as well. Furthermore, constructive listening includes responding to the other person with words and nonverbal expressions that demonstrate to the other person that he or she was understood.

5. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when empathic understanding is communicated.* The reflection of empathic understanding was alluded to in our discussion of principle four when we stressed the importance, during the listening process, of conveying to the other person that he or she was understood. Empathy involves the ability to "know" what the other person is thinking and feeling. Empathy is difficult to achieve—not only because our perceptive ability is limited but because we are often so wrapped up in our own thoughts and concerns that it becomes difficult to focus our attention on the communication of others.
6. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when there is accurate reflection and clarification of feeling.* There is a tendency to respond more to the content of what others say—the ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes conveyed—than to the feelings that others are expressing. Feelings are harder to respond to because most of us in our culture have had less experience responding to feelings than to ideas, and a response to feelings may require more of a commitment on our part to the interpersonal relationship than we are willing to give. Nevertheless, the accurate reflection and understanding of feeling is an essential part of a constructive interpersonal relationship.
7. *A constructive communicative relationship is likely when the communicators are genuine and congruent.* We are not as likely to develop a good relationship with others if we communicate in a false and misleading way. Facades are difficult to maintain and ultimately not very attractive. A constructive relationship is one in which the participants respond to each other in an honest and genuine manner. Our communication is congruent when the things that we do and say accurately reflect (are congruent with) our real thoughts and feelings.

Now that we have reviewed the content of interpersonal communication, let us look at some ways in which a teacher might organize a course in interpersonal communication. To begin with, we will make some general statements about the content we have covered thus far.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Thus far it has been explained that interpersonal communication is a subject matter area constituting part of the behavioral sciences. It will be described as an important dimension of the teacher-student relationship, and it is also an area rich in methodological opportunities. Finally, in contrast to all sorts of subject matter areas or course contents, it is imminently practical. Virtually anyone can see that its focal concerns are "real world"

concerns and that its applications can be both immediate and relevant. What one learns about the substantive matters in interpersonal communication can be dealt with directly and internalized with methods available and can be put into practice and tested in the world of personal experience. Not many courses or classes offer such an opportunity for turning the empirical or theoretical into immediately perceivable events or phenomena. But what is or can be the "content" of such a course?

One answer is that it includes all of the theory or research encompassed by the extended definition given earlier. While this is true in a sense, it is still too general to be useful to a teacher who might be faced with preparing a lecture that is not entirely global and abstract. Another answer is more inductive. The teacher and students can begin to observe humans communicating with one another and begin to label and categorize phenomena they see occurring. They can view the events as a researcher would and attempt to describe what appears to be happening. Such an approach could be fascinating and productive. Most probably the ways in which the teachers and students articulated the behavior would not be far from the ways in which research scientists have described the same thing. It might have the advantage of a less disciplined but more naive and open approach and a totally different kind of bias.

Whereas this approach could be useful in identifying the "content" of interpersonal communication, it has a couple of drawbacks. One is that some people have explored the same areas already and it might be helpful to have the benefit of their thinking. Taking advantage of what is already available allows one not to have to "start at the beginning." Another drawback is that the more one views the phenomena of interpersonal communication, the more one can see. Interpersonal communication is an exceedingly complex event with a multitude of implications. It is possible to see virtually all of human behavior as somehow related to interpersonal communication; a course in interpersonal communication must be undertaken within certain narrow limits so the observer is not responsible for an astronomical number of complex events occurring simultaneously. Induction is a productive approach, but it needs to be pinned down. An observer needs to know what he is to look for. As soon as the range is narrowed, labels and categories are required and the "content" begins to emerge.

Another way to determine the "content" of interpersonal communication and the emphases a course in interpersonal communication might deal with would be to go to a few of the available textbooks in the area and see the ways in which the various authors have made their own emphases. One such book is *Interpersonal Communication: Survey and Studies* by Dean Barnlund; another is *Basic Readings in Interpersonal Communication* edited by Kim Giffin and Bobby Patton; a third book is *An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* by James McCroskey, Carl Larson, and Mark Knapp; and a fourth is *Interpersonal Speech Communication: Elements and Structures* by John W. Keltner.

If one looks at the table of contents for each of these representative textbooks, he can see how different units of a course might be identified and distinguished from other potential units. An instructor who reads these four books or others suggested in the bibliography would have a solid grounding in what is called interpersonal communication. As with the other approaches to determining the content of interpersonal communication, there are a few drawbacks to this approach. The first is that many texts deal with the theory and research in interpersonal communication, and theory and research often have to be digested by the teacher and translated for the student. A class in which one learned about interpersonal communication by reading theory and research, except possibly for graduate seminars in the subject, would be dreary for all.

A second drawback is that there is not all that much agreement among the texts about how to segment and partition the substance of the investigations. Any given study can legitimately be put into several categories. So, as useful as it is to go to the table of contents of the books mentioned, it is also useful to remember that the "real" or "accurate" or "true" list of the content areas of interpersonal communication is not inscribed in marble in some heavenly realm, and that any such classification system is arbitrary and represents a convenience for the author and reader of the book. An inventive teacher or student can go through the books mentioned and synthesize his own list of topical areas by combining, changing, adding, and deleting as seems appropriate.

Still another approach to discovering the content of interpersonal communication might be interdisciplinary. There are at least a couple of ways to go about this. One would be to bring in teachers from other departments or disciplines and inquire what their specialty had to offer to an understanding of interpersonal communication. Another would be to develop and teach "interdisciplinary" courses with our colleagues in other areas. The "broadening" and "integrative" effect of discovering what history or political science or English can tell us about interpersonal relations is revealing and often helpful. The lines that separate departments are artificial. We have much to learn from one another.

Another approach would be to lay in a stock of basic books from the other behavioral sciences, such as psychology, sociology, and particularly social psychology, and read them *just* for what they can tell us about interpersonal communication. What they have to offer is considerable. At the same time, they provide their own views and procedures for identifying the communicative behavior that passes between people. Humanistic and clinical psychologies contribute other useful views. What the reader often discovers is that various disciplines have approached the same events repeatedly and have come to similar conclusions, but that the language used to describe the events varies with the assumptions and subjectivity associated with each discipline. In any case, such an interdisciplinary approach can result in a description of the content of interpersonal communication, its substance, and its subcategories.

An apparent disadvantage to this approach would appear to be that one is going after an understanding of interpersonal communication "indirectly," but this doesn't fit the facts. All of the disciplines, in their own ways, approach interpersonal communication "directly." Also, because interpersonal communication is germane to virtually all human affairs, there is no one "direct" way to go after an understanding of the content. What the learner has to decide is what is productive for him, and then he has to select accordingly from what is available.

Finally, for persons who wish to by-pass the suggestions made thus far and proceed immediately to dealing with important topics in interpersonal communication, the following approach might be helpful. First of all, if one is to look at the communication between people, it is often useful to get some insights into just one of those people at a time and some of the variables that will come into prominence when we combine the individuals into pairs. Some psychologists will tell us, in fact, that all psychology is individual psychology. So, it is useful to approach interpersonal communication by looking first at just one of those persons and attempting to understand "what makes him tick." It is possible to hold the view that once we can understand that, the addition of another person is simply the same information compounded. Such an approach might deal with or include some of the following topical areas:

Anxieties and frustrations
Attitudes, beliefs, values, and dogmatism
Congruence and control
Feelings and emotions
Individual and personal change
Intrapersonal communication
Intrapersonal conflict
Motivation
Nonverbal signals
Self-actualization
Self-awareness
Self-concept
Self-confrontation
Self-description
Self-disclosure
Self-esteem
Self-identity
Self-image
Self-presentation
Sexual identity
Theories of personality
Theories of self

Any and all of the above topics could provide the basic groundwork needed for understanding the individual and what he brings with him into an interpersonal communication act. All of the above topics contribute to an "understanding of self." If one makes the content-method connection at

this point, a good rule of thumb would be that we understand ourselves best through others.

If sufficient understanding has been gained of individual communication variables and one wishes to add the dimension of the other person, some of the following topics could constitute the content of that next level of understanding:

Barriers, facades, defensiveness
Interpersonal and social perception
Interpersonal attraction
Interpersonal conflict
Interpersonal disclosure
Interpersonal encounter
Interpersonal influence
Interpersonal needs
Listening and feedback
Manipulation and emotionality
Nonverbal communication
Sexual encounter
Ways of relating, confirmation

These topics should cover most of what is important to an understanding of interpersonal communication. Each one is worth at least a "unit" in a course in interpersonal communication, and all of them in combination could be said to comprise the content of such a course.

At this point, if we wished to go beyond person-to-person communication and add still other persons to the communication event, one could say that we have moved from an interpersonal to a social context. While it is true that a number of things can be said about groups which cannot be said about individuals or pairs of people, even if a group is present, interpersonal communication still goes on among the members. It is probably true that more interpersonal communication goes on in the group context than in any other. So the concepts associated with group interaction are still another important dimension for identifying and describing the variables of interpersonal communication and for seeing them in operation. Some of the topics to be dealt with might be the following:

Group composition
Group death and termination
Group decision making and problem solving
Group formation
Group goals
Group growth and development
Group performance
Group processes
Group resources and actualization
Group rules
Group structures
Individual versus the group
Interaction in groups

Intragroup conflict and intergroup conflict
Power and authority in groups
Social economics
Themes, moods, and motifs

As with the topics listed previously, each of these could be the focal point of a unit in a course on interpersonal communication. The combinations of the three lists of self-concerns, interpersonal concerns, and group concerns can provide a substantive and comprehensive view of the content of interpersonal communication and can provide the teacher and learners with a number of areas to explore. Lectures and readings can be constructed and selected to explain each of the topics, and exercises and activities can be evolved to go with the lectures and readings. It is an interesting and compelling subject matter area.

One could easily spend a lifetime attempting to gain a "command" of the topics that constitute the content of interpersonal communication as it is presently constituted. In addition, researchers are adding data to the area on a daily basis. Assuming though that we know what interpersonal communication "is" and what the content of it "is," we should next turn to the teaching of it, for that is one of the purposes of this publication.

PRACTICING WHAT WE TEACH

Now that all of this explanation has been made about what it is we call interpersonal communication, it is necessary to make another longer point. Interpersonal communication involves behavior skills developed from the sciences and moving from utility to art. But just as there are researchers and theorists in medicine, so there are practitioners of medicine—those who practice medicine by utilizing past research or medical theory. And just as there are behavioral scientists who research and theorize about human communication, so there are practitioners who utilize what they have gained from the researchers and theorists. Teachers of interpersonal communication fall into this latter category. They are the practitioners of interpersonal communication. They are "applied" behavioral scientists. There are a number of implications here. Let's explore some of them.

If someone practices medicine, he deals with people who are ill and tries to make them well again. This presumes that he can diagnose the illness and that he will know what he ought to prescribe to bring about better health in the patient. Generally speaking, the better the research which backs up the physician, the better are his chances for successful treatment of the patient. One thing that is essential, though, is that the state of medical science has reached the point where the physician generally believes he knows what needs to be done to make the patient better. He is working with a fairly simple, obvious, and widely accepted value—that it is better to be well than ill. The physician directs his efforts toward that end in improving the health of the patient.

The practitioner who is interested in changing human behavior is working from a different sort of base. If he is a psychiatrist, he has the same assumptions as the physician. His patients are mentally ill and he is attempting to improve their mental health. He uses what is called a "medical model," which assumes that the individual has an illness and that there is some treatment available for that illness. This approach has built into it most of the "treatment" assumptions that go with medicine. The only difficulty is that we are far less certain about how to treat mental illness than we are about how to treat most known physical illnesses. There are many approaches to the treatment of people who are depressed, anxious, hypertense, or neurotic, and there is only limited agreement about what these words mean. No single therapy can be applied to all of these illnesses or even answers any one of them continually.

A clinical psychologist may attempt to achieve the same results as the psychiatrist, but he may start from a psychological rather than a medical stance. Hence, he may concern himself with the environment of the client and how the environment may be manipulated—possibly by some sort of adjustment—to effect a change in the client. Again, just as with the psychiatrist, the clinical psychologist may be uncertain about what it was that brought about the "maladjustment" of his client and what method to employ to make him "better."

A "practitioner" or "technician" in the behavioral sciences, particularly one who works in interpersonal communication, has some similarities and dissimilarities to the psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist.

He is similar in that he is interested in the science of behavior and he draws upon behavioral theory and research. He is dissimilar in that the psychiatrist and clinical psychologist work with people who are presumed to be ill and must be made well. The interpersonal communication teacher works with people who are largely "well" and "psychologically healthy," but he has available to him all of the methods and techniques that are available to those who work with the maladjusted.

The interpersonal communication teacher, then, has resources to draw on to instruct "normal" and mentally healthy people. He doesn't work with the "medical model," which presumes illness and tries to make people well. He starts with well people and tries to help them become "better" or to "grow" in their knowing about interpersonal communication and their interpersonal competencies.

If there is substantial data or theory backing up such a teacher, then he may have some confidence about the concepts he is presenting or the methods he is using. If the research is weak or inconclusive or lacking, he would have reason to be unsure about what is "true" about human communication or how one can use what is known to instruct others. Just as with the psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist, he has his own uncertainty.

Some basic issues which we must deal with are: Should people be criticized openly? Is it all right for people to cry or for others to cause

them to cry? Should people be honest with other people if it involves telling them unpleasant things? Should we attempt to improve the self-image of people or learn their psychological profiles? Should people stick to content or deal with personal problems? Should people be encouraged to risk damage for reward or to play it safe? All of these issues confront the prospective teacher of interpersonal communication, and none of them have clear scientific answers right now. There may be religious or moral answers, but not behavioral science answers.

Interpersonal communication, because it can draw on all behavioral science for methods, is an area in which the methods have outstripped the research. We know more about what to do and how it works than why it works or why it should be done in the first place.

Because of this additional uncertainty, it is necessary to set some guidelines. Otherwise, even though we may have the power or influence to change people, we may change them inappropriately. We may hinder rather than help them. The following rules and guidelines are an attempt to provide a framework for the teaching and learning of interpersonal communication. They are arbitrary, incomplete, and in no special order. Teachers and students who use them are invited to add, delete, or alter them to suit their special purposes.

GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. It is useful, practical, and desirable to provide a student in an interpersonal communication course with options or alternatives. Rather than telling a student how he "ought to be," it is better to provide choices. The final selection or rejection is up to the learner. No one is in a position to make such decisions for others or to dictate preferred behavior. There is no one preferred behavior. We all need to choose what is best for us.

2. Participation in exercises or activities ought to be voluntary. Exercises and activities are a waste of time for both teacher and learner if they are forced on or resisted by the learner. It is not worthwhile to lead an unthirsty horse to water.

3. Even if a student does not want to participate in an exercise or activity, he should not leave the scene. By watching others he may discover that what is going on is not so threatening. If he doesn't participate, he should not interfere with the learning of others.

4. Participation in exercises or activities should not be graded. If behavior is being evaluated, the learner is unable to make mistakes or to

try out new behaviors. Grading inhibits the freedom to experiment, to be spontaneous, to be authentic, or to make unpunished errors.

5. The "growth model" is more appropriate to the teaching and learning of interpersonal behavior than the "medical model." Students should not be "treated" as if there were something wrong with them, but rather as if they were sound, right, healthy, and good. The growth model tells us that (as Jane Howard so beautifully put it) "you don't have to be sick to get better." *Better*, in this sense, means more whole, satisfied, fulfilled, complete, more fully functioning as a human being, or, as Abraham Maslow labelled it, more "self-actualized." Communication, particularly interpersonal communication, is believed to be a key to all of that.

6. The teacher should not ask the students to engage in any exercise or activity that the teacher has not already engaged in and tested for himself (that's not "would engage in" but "has engaged in"). The exception to this rule would be instances in which a new exercise has been generated and is being tried out. In this case, the participants should be told that they're trying out something new.

7. The teacher cannot run the exercises and participate in them at the same time. The teacher who keeps changing his role is likely to play his roles partially and poorly. Either the teacher directs or participates, but not *both*.

8. The teacher should avoid the "hair shirt" philosophy which tells us that whatever is hard or difficult is thereby "good" for us. We have no reason to believe that exercises which are difficult for the participants are any better for them than those which are easy and enjoyable. Suffering is not inherently character-building and adversity doesn't necessarily "make the man." Each student has different needs and different comfort levels and will derive different benefits from his participation. While it might sometimes be necessary for students to endure some discomfort or take some risks in order to grow, they are in the best position to see the options provided, agree to the contract for growth, and accept the challenge and level of difficulty. Whipping is for sadists.

9. If an exercise or activity seems not to work, it may be because of the characteristics of the students involved, the composition of the group, the situation surrounding the activity, the timeliness of the activity, the quality of the exercise, or the effectiveness of the teacher in presenting or directing it. One doesn't know why something works or doesn't work unless it is somehow assessed. It is usually worth the time to do a brief evaluation of what was done and what was learned. This might involve what was effective or what needs to be improved on. It is this openness, willingness to submit to assessment, and norm for feedback which (a) clarifies what was gained by what was done,

(b) reinforces the effective and identifies the ineffective, allowing for improvement, and (c) reminds the students of their responsibility in the learning process. Teaching is not show business and the teacher is not a performer. No one can make someone learn who doesn't want to learn. It is appropriate for the students and the teacher to remind one another about their joint responsibilities and their interdependence. The teacher facilitates learning.

10. The final and ultimate test of whether or not there is value in learning applied behavioral science, in learning and experiencing interpersonal communication, is most probably in the behavior and interpersonal communication of the practitioner himself. If it's any good, it should have done him some good—it should have made a difference in his life. If it hasn't, either the area doesn't amount to much, he doesn't understand it, or he hasn't internalized it. If he doesn't want to internalize it, probably he shouldn't be in the "practice" of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is not only something that is taught, it is lived on a day-to-day basis. The teacher continually should be making applications to himself, should be in the process of improving his own interpersonal competence. Otherwise there is good reason to doubt or question what he tells others or tries to lead them to. We faintly suspect the sinning minister, the unmarried marriage counselor, the childless child psychologist, the drunken reformer, the law-breaking policeman, and the bald hair restorer. We are our own best (or worst) students and our own best (or worst) examples.

THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

It is foolish if not impossible to separate the teaching and learning of interpersonal communication from teaching and learning generally. The same things we know about learning anything apply to teaching and learning about interpersonal communication. At the same time, the interpersonal aspect of teaching and learning has long been ignored, or at least not fully utilized. If there is a content or subject matter which we might call interpersonal communication, then there are also interpersonal principles which need to be considered in teaching that content. Interpersonal communication is both a substantive area of study and a very important aspect of the totality of teaching and learning anything.

For instance, there is now a rather well-articulated set of principles about the context in which learning is facilitated. Many of the principles have grown out of studies of the interactions between client and therapist in psychiatric counseling. Others derive from the studies of interpersonal interactions in small groups, chiefly therapy groups and encounter groups. Those who have studied the client-therapist relationship and the relationships of persons in groups have noted well the characteristics of the en-

vironment wherein change, growth, and learning seem most likely to take place. From these observations a set of principles have been drawn which describe how learning in general seems to take place.

Many persons have attempted to describe the characteristics of environments which facilitate learning, most notably J. L. Moreno, Carl Rogers, Roy Menninger, and Rollo May. There are many summaries of these characteristics available, but most include one or more of the following points:

1. *The learner must be actively involved.* In some way the learner must be caught up in the experience, cognitively, emotionally and perhaps even physically. He must be doing something, not passively absorbing something. If possible, his whole being should be involved.
2. *That which is learned must touch the self.* At some significant level, what is being learned must touch the person. The learning must be personally relevant in some way so that the learner can feel that what is at hand is of significance to him.
3. *The person who facilitates the learning* (teacher, leader, therapist) *must be authentic and accepting.* The facilitator must communicate regard for the learner, empathy for his feelings, and acceptance of the learner as a person.
4. *The learning should involve a memorable insight.* The insight need not be dramatic, but some new understanding or clarification should be retained from the experience. The experience of growth should be memorable, and the learner should be able to describe how he now sees things differently.
5. *The facilitator assumes and draws upon the previous knowledge of the learner.* Instead of assuming that the learner is an empty jug or a blank slate, the facilitator draws upon the existing knowledge of the learner and helps him to forge new insights based on what he already knows.
6. *Learning involves interpersonal relations.* Learning is a function of interpersonal relations; it takes place in the presence of persons and is mediated by persons. As such it is intensely personal.

These six principles are well summarized in the following paragraphs from a lecture given by Carl Rogers at Harvard in 1966:

> When I have been able to transform a group—and here I mean all the members of a group, myself included—into a community of *learners,* then the excitement has been almost beyond belief. To free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interests; to unleash curiosity; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognize that everything is in process of change—here is an experience I can never forget. I cannot always achieve it in groups with which I am associated, but when it is partially or largely achieved then it becomes a never-to-be-forgotten group experience. Out of such a context arise true students, real learners, creative scientists and scholars and practitioners, the kind of individuals who can live in a delicate but everchanging balance between what is pres-

ently known and the flowing, moving, altering problems and facts of the future. . . . We know . . . that the initiation of such learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon his scholarly knowledge of the field, not upon his curricular planning, not upon his use of audio-visual aids, not upon the programmed learning he utilizes, not upon his lectures and presentations, not upon an abundance of books, though each of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal *relationship* between the facilitator and the learner.

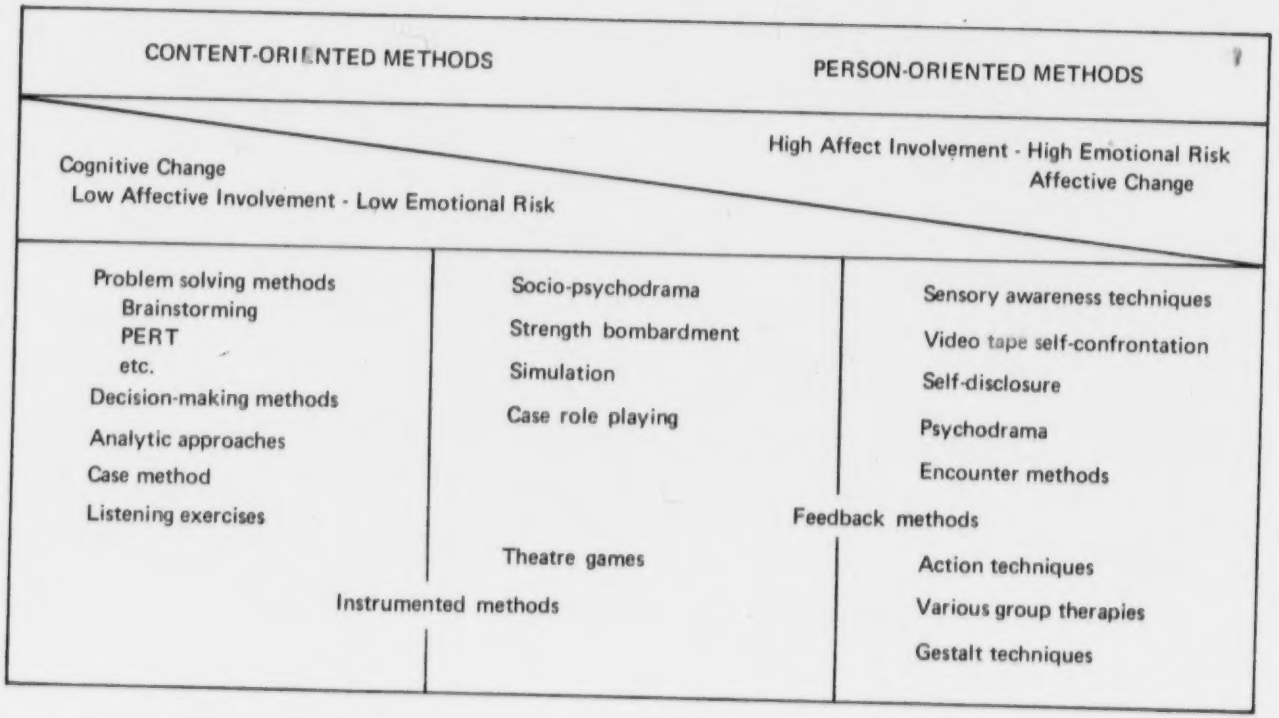
All of the principles listed above reflect the importance of the interpersonal relation in teaching and learning generally. They apply equally well, if not more so, to the teaching and learning of interpersonal communication.

SOME COMMENTS ON TEACHING METHODS GENERALLY

What guidelines can be provided for selecting teaching methods? First, that newness is not goodness. Some of the old tried and true methods are every bit as useful as whatever appears to be the most recently developed method. There is a lot of faddishness associated with methods, and there is a tendency for educators to believe that whatever has captured people's imagination and interest is "it," and that methodologists need to proceed no further in their quest for developing ways to turn content into experience. But newness is relative, and the latest method might be the oldest one with a change of clothes and a new name—which leads to a second point. There is no magic method. Nothing works all the time and nothing can be used for teaching everything. The teacher needs to develop an instinct for "what fits" and to determine in each learning situation which method fits the class he's trying to teach or the content that the class is attempting to learn.

Methods are generally brought to bear on a couple of kinds of learnings: (1) resolving existing difficulties, such as solving problems and making decisions about "what ought to be done about the mess we're in," and (2) improving people or operations. Whereas the first may be oriented toward content, it often involves affect, and the second virtually always involves affect because it involves "people changing." The question of "fit" is always present when methods are employed. It is possible to underestimate what is needed to facilitate the learning, and it is also possible to "overkill" by involving a group in an intensive experience to learn a simple point. The following diagram lists a number of commonly used methods on a continuum ranging from low risk, low involvement, content-oriented methods to high risk, high involvement, person-oriented methods.

METHOD EMPLOYMENT EXAMPLES:



But how can the teacher who wishes to use methods become more knowledgeable about the opportunities available to him? Finding appropriate group methods is no easy task. It involves constant searching and an uncanny ability to translate an idea into action, modifying a general concept to fit the particular needs of one's own concerns. The teacher interested in employing methods can read further in some of the references suggested at the end of this book, but, for the most part, he will find his best resource to be colleagues with similar interests.

If, as we've suggested, there seem to be content or task-oriented methods and people or interpersonal-oriented methods, then what are those methods and how might they be used in teaching a course? The answer to the first question is easier than the answer to the second. Following is a partial list of methods categorized according to whether the emphasis it is likely to take would be content or person. This listing is a convenience only. There is a problem inherent in the classification. It represents only the suggested use or most likely use of the method, but not its potential use. It might be best to view the list as a spectrum with people and content ends and with "sliding categories" on the spectrum.

Partial Methods List

Task-Content

1. Sociometry (Moreno)
2. Creative dramatics
3. Case method
   (a) Critical incident
4. Problem-solving
   (a) Reflective thinking (Dewey)
   (b) Brainstorming (Osborn)
   (c) Ideal solution
   (d) DELPHI (Rand Corporation)
   (e) Single question
5. Games
6. Parliamentary procedure
7. Competitions
8. Dialogue (dialectic)
9. Argumentation
   (a) Cross-examination
10. Public discussion
    (a) Round table
    (b) Panel
    (c) Symposium
    (d) Interview
    (e) Colloquium
    (f) Forum
11. Criticism

People-Interpersonal

1. Sociodrama (Moreno)
2. Leaderless groups
3. Managerial grid (Blake)
4. Action gestalt
5. Fantasy
6. Projective tests and projects
7. Micro-lab
8. Laboratory method
9. Sensory awareness
   (a) Stimulating-wakening
   (b) Relaxing-comforting
10. Feedback methods
11. Sensitivity (T-group) training
12. Self-confrontation (Including video tape)
13. TORI process (Gibb)
14. Bio-feedback methods
15. Instrumented (Blake and Mouton, Wood)
16. MacGregor's XY management style

Partial Methods List, Continued

Task-Content

12. Decision-making
    (a) Classical
    (b) Marginal
    (c) Mathematical
    (d) Psychological
13. Simulation

There's a story about a man who had been suspected of stealing from a factory. He had been seen numerous times leaving the factory with a wheelbarrow full of sawdust. Repeatedly he had been searched and the sawdust had been carefully sifted, but nothing had ever been found. Finally, in desperation, the officials told him that they knew he was stealing something and didn't know what it was, but that they would let him go completely free if he would tell them how and what he was managing to steal. He told them it was wheelbarrows.

A method is something like a wheelbarrow. It can carry nearly any content. Moreover, if you select the method well, the content will ride into the room gracefully. A method well-employed will not call attention to itself. A method poorly-employed will be self-conscious and obvious. If we do our teaching well, people will have to ask us afterwards what the method was, because they've been so busy with the content. Ideally, we should all be in the position of saying, "Wheelbarrows." If we can't be in that position, at least we shouldn't be using thimbles to carry houses and semi-trucks to carry peas. There must be appropriateness and there must be "fit." The method list is only suggestive of the kind of content that might be carried. Nearly any method can carry nearly any content, so it is easy for a method to move from one column to another, for instruments to deal with self, for simulations to approximate real and sensitive experiences, and for encounters to turn topical. No method comes with a guarantee.

Just as the student is best off if he has options and can enter into learning activities voluntarily, the teacher is best off if he has options also and can select for appropriateness and maximum potential learning. Most teachers have available to them as methods, the methods their own teachers employed. Sometimes one can be comfortable with someone else's presentation or method, but most often not. It is something akin to wearing someone else's clothes. Even if they fit, it's not the same as having your own.

Ideally, the teacher should have a selection of methods all polished up, should know the content he is going to pursue, and should select as suits the situation, the students, and himself. Knowing what is available, the students might also wish to be provided with the options so they can choose, and they should be encouraged to. If they can help to determine what they are going to learn and how they are going to learn it, they will

take more and more of the responsibility for their own learning. They will share the success or failure of the learning venture. Teaching is not a performance, and the students are not an audience to be entertained. They should be active participants, invested with responsibility, trusted to cooperate, sharing in the results of the effort.

But it's not always that easy for the teacher to match method and content or for the students to know where they're going or what they want. The more the method or exercise or activity is "structured," that is, planned or organized with predictable outcomes, the more one can match content to method. However, with the people-oriented methods, much of what is usually thought of as content comes out of the people themselves. They deal with their own feelings and emotions, their own histories or dreams, their own problems or traumas. At that end of the spectrum, the outcomes are much less predictable, and too much structuring destroys the vitality and spontaneity that are most suited to "people changing." When the content comes from the participants and can't be planned for, then the teacher needs to be adaptable and resourceful. But still, this calls for having some methods options available and selecting wisely to suit the needs of the participants.

The more the teacher moves to the people end of the spectrum, the more he deals with affective change, the more risk he encounters, and the more he must change his own role from that of "teacher" to that of "facilitator." The learner is the focal point, and the role of the facilitator is to help the student go where he needs to go and deal with what he needs to deal with. Someone invested with the care of the learner should not go that route unless he knows the risk involved and has some confidence he can handle the concerns that it generates. If the teacher is uncertain about being able to cope with whatever might occur, it might be best for him to go that route a step at a time so he can retreat to familiarity if he gets in over his head.

Even with all the cautions that have been registered, it is still necessary to say that most education is content-centered and essentially cognitive. Even though there is a substantial content to interpersonal communication, there is far more to the teaching of interpersonal communication than just the content. Affective learning is every bit as important as cognitive learning, yet it has been ignored by the schools, as have the concerns for values. The teacher of interpersonal communication can hardly avoid dealing with the affective or emotional side of learning or trying to deal with the questions of values that such learning involves, even though there is no "right answer" to such questions. There is also a widely accepted notion that a teacher should be neutral on all such issues, as if he were a "non-person." In our opinion, *the teacher has no right to be neutral, but he has an obligation to be honest, and his students have a right to expect this from him.*

Secondly, to teach interpersonal communication without letting the students engage one another and communicate interpersonally is something akin to teaching bowling by the book and never going to a bowling alley.

The students have one another available as resources. If the affective side of such learning is avoided or ignored, the students may get the impression that they have been invited to a banquet but have been served with the same old garbage they could get in any class.

To teach interpersonal communication virtually requires that affect be dealt with and that the teacher provide the opportunity. In order to do this, the teacher may discover that he has to "stretch" his capabilities for doing that kind of teaching. It may also require that the teacher work some on his own interpersonal communicating, just as he is asking the students to do. A teacher who is unwilling to do either of these—stretch his capacity for dealing with affect and work on his interpersonal relations—may be unsuited to teach interpersonal communication. This doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with the teacher or that he is deficient. Some of us are unsuited to teach geography, some are unsuited to teach algebra, because we avoid the work that needs to be done or the challenges that need to be met in order to become proficient in these areas.

If we know some of the methods available, if we know the task-content-cognitive or people-interpersonal-affective aspects of those methods, and if we know the role and personal requirements of the teacher facilitator, then what's the next step in bringing interpersonal learning to the students? We believe it is to make the classroom a laboratory rather than a lecture hall, a therapy session, or a happening.

Why not a therapy session or a happening? If the class tends to want to practice therapy on its members, they have ceased to be a learning group in the normal sense. The "medical model" rather than the "growth model" is being employed, and most importantly, the class may be engaged in something it cannot handle if a crisis is reached. Therapy requires knowledge and expertise. It is difficult even for the most experienced. To let a class engage in this sort of activity is something like letting a butcher do brain surgery. Even the best butchers are quickly out of their depth.

Avoid solving personal problems, as you would avoid telling people how they ought to be feeling or how they ought to be behaving. Concentrate on staying in the present, dealing with experiences of interpersonal communication, and sharing viewpoints on the experience. Whatever applications are there, the learner can select from and utilize as is best for him.

But why no happenings? A happening is an experience without any special point which is undergone just for the experience itself. While there is nothing wrong with happenings, one doesn't need to go to school to have one. Students have a right to expect learning to be more than random. If they can't expect it, then most probably we should tear down the schools and just have libraries and media centers. The same goes for bull sessions. If they are random and pointless, they shouldn't take school time. A laboratory for learning requires a more positive and a more purposeful approach to learning.

A LABORATORY APPROACH TO INTERPERSONAL LEARNING

There are several reasons for making the classroom into a laboratory. In the normal or average or conventional classroom the teacher acts as a source of information. He simply knows more about twentieth century British literature or Chinese art or the Civil War Reconstruction Period than do the students, so he usually ends up telling the students what he thinks he knows that the students don't. Usually the teacher does all of the talking. Although it is possible to do this in a class in interpersonal communication, it is not as profitable a class as it might be.

The teacher talking all the time usually results in what might be termed the "listen and go home syndrome" that most of us associate with large group meetings. Moreover, research going back to the 1920s tells us that 70 percent of an adult's waking time is spent in communication with others, with at least 40 percent of that time spent in listening. In high schools and colleges, 90 percent of class time is spent in listening.

We know now that an average fourth grader comprehends and retains approximately 21-33 percent of what he listens to. An average adult comprehends and retains approximately 50 percent of what he listens to, but that percentage is reduced by time. In two months, he retains roughly 25 percent of what he originally listened to and will forget even more with the passage of time.

The fatal flaw in the conventional classroom is that the teacher talks all of the time and the students retain almost nothing. It is hard to conceive of a more fruitless or frustrating way to spend time together. It is a wonder that all of us don't become dropouts, or that some of us manage to learn anything at all. Given the system that we all learn in, it is an extraordinary comment on human curiosity and the resiliency of the human spirit that we are not all anti-intellectual illiterates.

Not only are all of those words the teachers spoke to us inadequate to represent the world we live in, but we can't remember them even if we try, and we don't listen to a lot of them anyway. Any one of these reasons or all of them in unison ought to tell us to change the classroom. We feel that a laboratory approach, although difficult to manage and not always successful, is a step in the right direction. But what is a laboratory and what goes on in it?

With traditional learning we expect the following: chairs in rows, formality, learning is work (schoolwork, homework), individual effort (cooperation is frowned on), passivity, anonymity, and one-way communication. The teacher has the questions and the answers as well, and the learning is never for *now*.

What do we associate with learning in laboratories, for instance, a chemistry laboratory? We expect that students will all be informed in advance about the project that they are undertaking, that the time will be

spent in activity rather than in listening to the teacher, that there will be practicing of cognitive learning, that there will be experimenting and inquiry, that people will solve problems and discover answers inductively, that they will make mistakes without any kind of penalty, that they will improve a skill and get better at something, that they will make their learning practical by applying it, and, possibly, that they will cooperate and help one another.

All of these kinds of things that might be said about learning in a chemistry laboratory could be said about a laboratory in interpersonal communication. Moreover, laboratory learning, because it necessitates doing something, takes the learner (and teacher) out of the realm of the purely verbal and out of the domain of the purely cognitive. A laboratory in interpersonal communication would almost surely involve the affective aspects of human behavior discussed previously. It would involve a more "wholistic" view of the learner than is found in the conventional classroom.

Ideally, in a laboratory setting, there would be involvement and investment in the learning, the teacher would talk only as is necessary, the students would use what they know already, the students would use one another as resources, the applications of the learning would be fairly immediate, and the students would learn on several levels.

The laboratory approach assumes that there are three levels of learning, the intellectual (cognitive-verbal) level, the skills (proficiency-effectiveness) level, and the experiential (affective-emotional) level, often called the "gut level." An ideal learning experience would be one which involved all three levels, but this is not easily accomplished.

It is possible for a session to have three phases, one for each level of learning. Such a session would involve some data giving or cognitive input, it would involve some exercise or activity which somehow allowed the learner to experience the substance of what the data or input was about, and, finally, it would involve some opportunity on the part of the learner to integrate the data and experience into his own behavior—to make it part of his own capability. In this way, the data and experience are incorporated within the behavioral repertory of the person and are available on the skill level.

So, to review, an ideal or optimum interpersonal communication laboratory learning session includes all three levels of learning: the learner understands the material intellectually, he experiences the material through the application of a method, and he integrates it into his own being on a skills level so it can become a part of his ever-increasing interpersonal communication competencies.

The following resources are designed to allow the teacher to organize such a class. There are four areas of resources. The first section includes major theories of interpersonal communication. The second is a selected list of textbooks in interpersonal communication. The third section is sources on the content of interpersonal communication arranged in topical subcategories. The first three resource sections could constitute

the data or intellectual portion of interpersonal communication sessions. The fourth and final section is on some of the methods available to the teacher of interpersonal communication. They range from the low risk, highly cognitive, content-centered methods to the high risk, affective, people-centered methods. Most likely, the task of fitting the content to the method and watching the learning emerge on three levels will be done differently in every classroom, and different emphases will be made depending upon the needs of the teachers and students. But it is a joint venture, a challenging and exciting one, and one in which some of the learnings will last a lifetime.

Resources

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